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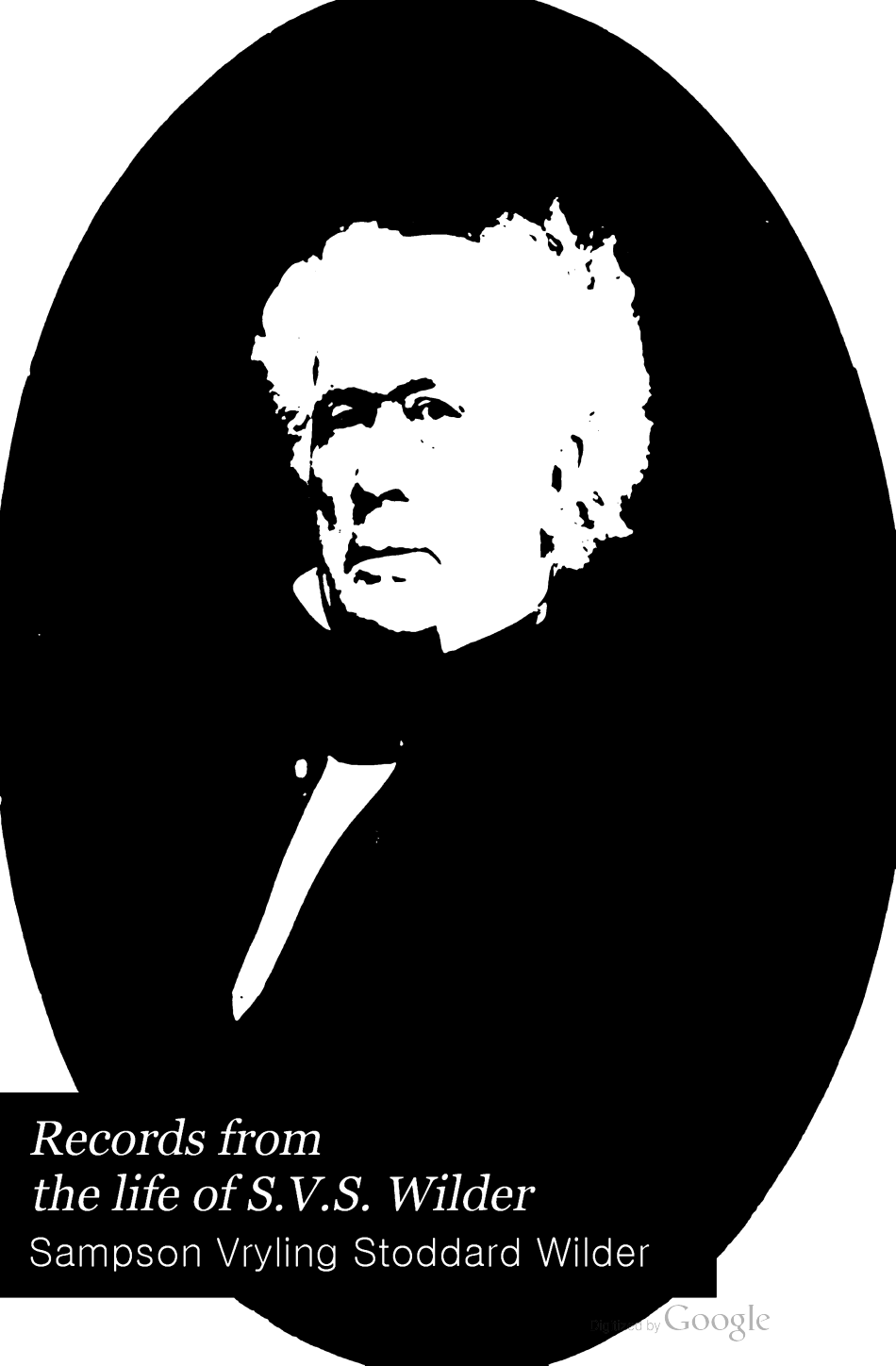

Records from the life of S.V.S. Wilder

Sampson Vryling Stoddard Wilder

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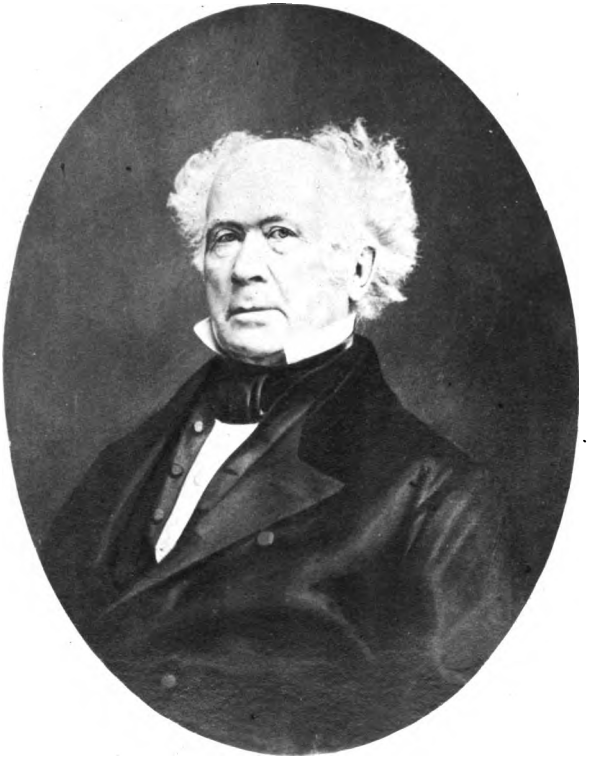

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RECORDS

FROM THE LIFE

OF

SAMPSON VARYLING STADDARD WILDER.

"CONFIRMING THE WORD." MARK 16:20.

PUBLISHED BY THE
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RECORDS FROM THE LIFE

OF

S. V. S. WILDER.

I.

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. Gen. 17 : 7.

No one passing through the beautiful town of Lancaster, Mass., can have failed to notice the elm-trees, so remarkable for size and symmetry, which constitute the chief outward attraction of the place. One of these, standing just below the "old common" near the ancestral home of S. V. S. Wilder, and partly overshadowing the burial-place of his fathers, might almost be considered a type of himself. It grew in the highway, where all passing by might rejoice in its shadow. It was planted there, a mere sapling, by one of his ancestors, and noble in form and bearing, extending widely its branches, it, all through life and still in old age, brought forth

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a rich treasure of blessing for all coming under its influence. "Blessed," and like such a tree, said Jeremiah, "is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Jer. 17 : 7. Of this the history of S. V. S. Wilder, in connection with that of his ancestry, is but another illustration.

Of this ancestry many interesting records are preserved. *Thomas Wilder*, coming from Lancaster in England, spelling his name Wyelder, signs his name, July 1, 1659, to a "covenant," entered into by the first settlers of Lancaster, "for the better preserving of religion and ourselves from infection of error."

His son *Thomas Wilder, Jr.*, paid among the highest rates for building a house for the minister, and also gave from his own farm a plot for the public burying-ground, in which he was the first interred.

His son *Judge Joseph Wilder* was an "active magistrate;" is called "a man of extensive influence, who in the *depths of his wisdom* opposed Lancaster's being made a shire-town, lest it should be the means of corrupting the morals of the inhabitants."

Col. Caleb Wilder was the son of Judge Joseph. The old homestead, which, although it had been fortified during the troubles with the Indians, had suffered much from their assaults as well as from those of time, he allowed to subside into a mere farm-house, replacing it by a substantial brick house.

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To this dwelling, newly finished, *Levi Wilder*, the son of Col. Caleb, brought his bride Sarah Stoddard; and in it, May 20th, 1780, was born his son SAMPSON VRYLING STODDARD WILDER.

The character of Levi Wilder in many respects foreshadowed that of his more widely known son. He is said more than once to have spent the whole day riding round with the sheriff sent to collect the minister's tax, and himself paying the dues when the cow or pig of any poor family would otherwise be seized in order to raise the sum required. In his last sickness, occasioned by a fall, he encouraged his wife to adopt a poor destitute child, brought to her by its father, saying, "Take her, Sallie, you'll be blessed." He was beloved and respected by all, and died Jan. 5, 1793, aged 42.

Of his paternal ancestry, S. V. S. Wilder, in 1859, wrote to a distant relative, "Standing as I do on the ashes of a hundred generations who have entered upon the retributions of the eternal world, and having nearly attained to the age assigned in the sacred Scriptures as the outer verge of life's duration, I have deemed it a matter of secondary consideration whether the name of Wilder has been distinguished by any chivalrous deeds or scientific discoveries, or if it has in any way been engraved on the perishing tablets of earthly fame, provided the name be found written in the 'Lamb's book of life.' Nor have I considered it a matter of any consequence whether those of the name possessed a few acres more or less of this terrestrial

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sod, or the glittering dust beneath its surface, provided they have a clear title to 'an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,' 'eternal in the heavens.'" And again he writes, "May not the feeble remnant of the elder branch of the Wilder family contemplate with thrilling and sacred emotion the joyful day when they shall recognize the pure spirits of their pious ancestry among the redeemed throng in that blissful abode, where a more than earthly kindred shall be the bond, love to the Saviour the inspiring motive, and praise to Him the everlasting theme?"

The STODDARD family, to which Mr. Wilder's mother belonged, emigrated from the West of England, and came to Boston about A. D. 1639. Mr. Wilder ever felt that his great-uncle, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard of Northampton, though distinguished as a divine, had done harm by favoring the introduction of the "half-way covenant" into the New England churches. Mr. Wilder's grandfather, Sampson Stoddard, who married Margaret Vryling, was the third in descent from the original settler in this country, Anthony Stoddard. This Sampson Stoddard graduated at Harvard in 1730, was a man of property, and much respected.

The promise to Abraham and his seed was made when he was called to leave his father's house, and seek a distant country where he could find "freedom to worship God." Did Margaret Von Vryling, in 1715, think of this when she too, for a like reason, left the land of her fathers for a

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new home among strangers? Yet not strangers, for here on this Western soil did already many of her best friends, her kindred, dwell—those who, like herself, had here sought refuge from intolerance and persecution.

Of the history of Margaret Van Vryling and her immediate descendants, also of some particulars respecting his father's loss of property, Mr. Wilder has himself left some details. These were given in partial answer to inquiry as to the way in which he had been led, amidst counter influences, to take so decided a stand on the Lord's side, and this at a comparatively early period in life. This record was intended—to use his own words—"to show how the blessed truths of the gospel, as preached at Amsterdam by the Rev. John Robinson of Puritan memory, were transmitted from mother to daughter, and were thus imbibed by my precious grandmother and mother, and that it was through their instrumentality, by the sustaining grace of God, that I was enabled to resist the seductions and temptations of errors which at one time spread throughout New England."

"My maternal great-grandfather Van Vryling was a distinguished merchant in Amsterdam, and acquired his property in trading between that city and Batavia. He died about the year 1714, leaving an ample fortune to his family, consisting of a wife, Mrs. Margaret Van Vryling, and four daughters, the youngest of whom was my grandmother Margaret Vryling, then an infant.

"After the death of King William III., in 1702, party politics and religious dissensions prevailed in Holland to an

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alarming extent for many years, to the severance, in many instances, of family ties and social intercourse. The Vryling family were not exempt from this religious disunion.

"For many years previous to the death of William and Mary, my great-grandmother Margaret Van Vryling, having when a girl been sent to a boarding-school at Dort, had, by the grace of God, imbibed the orthodox tenets which were promulgated by the pious Robinson and our Pilgrim fathers during their stay in Holland, previous to their embarkation for Plymouth Rock in 1620. Her two eldest daughters, however, who were many years older than my grandmother, had embraced the then more fashionable and lax opinions of Erasmus.

"The Van Vryling family being thus divided on the great and essential truths of the gospel, and my pious, evangelical great-grandmother being unrelentingly 'persecuted for righteousness' sake' by her influential opponents, and finding no longer any sympathy, peace, or comfort in the society of her two oldest daughters, decided to divide the heritage with them, and embark with her portion thereof and that of her two youngest daughters for the land of the Pilgrims, where she could openly profess the pure doctrines of the cross, and worship God in conformity to the dictates of her own conscience, without any one to molest or make her afraid.

"Commending therefore her two eldest daughters to the God of all grace, and cherishing the fond hope that their hearts would ere long become imbued with the riches of divine grace, and they thereby be led to relinquish their heretical views and follow her footsteps to this land of refuge, and bidding farewell to all her former associates and to the local attachments of her younger years, this lonely widow embarked, in the year 1715, with her two youngest daughters and several pious Dutch families, who, like herself, were animated with the same glorious hopes, cheered by the same exhilarating prospects, relying on the same gracious promises, and looking to the same divine Saviour for salvation.

"It seems, however, that this my truly evangelical great-

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grandmother, who relinquished all the associations and endearments of her native home for the gospel's sake, never realized her fond anticipations of being joined by her two eldest daughters, who lived as maiden ladies in Amsterdam to a great age.

"After several years' residence in Boston, my great-grandmother was called to mourn the death of the eldest of her two daughters in this country; and two years after, the bereaved mother died, in the joyful hope of a blissful immortality, leaving my grandmother Margaret Vryling,—the Van, it seems, then being relinquished—sole heiress of all the property, which was considered in those days a large estate.

"Previous to this period, my maternal grandfather Sampson Stoddard, who was then a widower with one son, Sampson, and one daughter, had made the acquaintance of my grandmother Margaret Vryling, with whom he was subsequently united in the sacred bonds of matrimony.

"My grandfather Stoddard, unwilling to appropriate any part of the Vryling patrimony to his own use, and desirous to secure the same for the benefit of his wife and the children of his second marriage, invested those funds in the purchase of the townships of Fitz-William, Ackworth, Stoddard—which bears his name—and a part of the town of Rindge, New Hampshire, forming in the aggregate upwards of eighty thousand acres.

"By this second marriage he had one daughter, Sarah Stoddard, who was my highly cherished mother, and one son, Vryling Stoddard.

"My two uncles, Sampson Stoddard and Vryling Stoddard aforesaid, who were educated at Cambridge, graduating there in 1763 and 1765, died before my mother's marriage, and she became sole heiress of her mother's estate, and I inherited the combined names of said uncles. Hence the initials S. V. S. W.

"About the year 1770, intelligence was received from Amsterdam that both the maiden sisters of my grandmother had died within a few months of each other, leaving a property to the heirs in America of thirty-two thousand pounds sterling in cash, with three houses estimated to be worth six

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or seven thousand pounds more; making in all, with accumulated interest, about forty thousand pounds sterling. The question then was, how to transmit this property to America.

"It so happened that at this period there resided at Chelmsford, of which place my great-grandfather was the minister, a retired sea-captain, who some ten years before had purchased a snug estate near my grandfather's, and who had become intimate with the family. This captain proposed to my grandfather to charter a moderate sized vessel, and proceed to Amsterdam, with full powers to dispose of the real estate and sell the public securities of the thirty-two thousand pounds, invest the whole in specie, and return with it to Boston.

"My grandfather having most unqualified confidence in this captain, readily embraced what was then considered an advantageous arrangement. Accordingly the requisite papers, with authenticated vouchers identifying the heirs in this country, were made out and delivered to the said captain, who proceeded in his chartered vessel to Amsterdam. After remaining there between five and six months, he wrote home to my grandfather that he had succeeded in disposing of the real estate for a little rising five thousand pounds; that he had sold the stocks, and had realized some thirty-eight thousand pounds sterling for the whole, which, in conformity with instructions, he had invested in specie, and that he had caused insurance thereon to be effected in London, from the port of Amsterdam to that of Boston in America, and that he was ready to sail with the first fair wind.

"This was the last letter that was ever received from him. The only intelligence that he had sailed was an announcement to that effect in an English paper a few days after the date of the last letter.

"Month after month rolled away, and no tidings of said vessel until after eighteen months, when two sailors arrived in Boston from China, stating that they were hands on board said vessel, and were the only survivors who escaped when the vessel was wrecked in the straits of Malacca.

"On being questioned before a magistrate in Boston, they stated that when the vessel, on its way to America,

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reached the mouth of the British Channel, the captain assembled the crew, and apprized them that by proceeding to China and investing in teas and silk, he could more than double the amount; and that if they would assent to proceed to China, he would double their wages and allow them a certain percentage on the profits of the voyage.

"Having thus obtained the assent of the crew, the course of the vessel was changed, by crossing the Bay of Biscay and round the Cape of Good Hope, until they reached the straits of Malacca, where the vessel foundered, and all perished but these two men, who were picked up by another vessel.

"Whether the captain was tempted by the large funds in possession to run away, or whether he really intended to invest the property and return to Boston, will never be known until the parties shall be summoned to the judgment-seat of Christ. But be this as it may, it was a deviation from the direct course, and in consequence vitiated the insurance. Thus was lost to the family a property of nearly two hundred thousand dollars.

"But misfortunes seldom come singly. A few years after the foregoing catastrophe, my grandfather Stoddard, desirous of having his townships settled and realizing part of the proceeds, made arrangements with from one to two hundred young men to proceed thither and select farms of two hundred acres each, and become actual settlers thereon, and agreed that when they could pay down a certain portion, he would give them deeds, taking mortgages for the residue of the payment.

"My grandfather, not having stipulated to be paid in hard money, and being a firm Whig and patriot, and having great confidence in the good faith of the new government that the Continental paper money would eventually be redeemed, a portion of the young men availed themselves of its deterioration—when one silver dollar would purchase fifty, or even a hundred paper dollars—to pay off my grandfather, and thus obtain their deeds.

"I perfectly recollect, when a boy, seeing in the attic of our brick mansion in Lancaster, several barrels of this money, which had been paid to my grandfather and his execu-

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tors, and which our government finally redeemed at one cent on the dollar.

"But hundreds of farms in the aforesaid townships were taken possession of by squatters at and after the period of my grandfather's death, during the distracted times of our Revolutionary struggle, who never obtained any titles from the Stoddard family.

"I well recollect that a short time after my father's death, a lawyer from Stoddard called on my mother, and stated that two claimants were in litigation respecting a valuable farm in the town, and he being employed in behalf of one of the claimants, offered my mother one thousand dollars for her deed of the farm; but she absolutely refused to accede to the offer, saying that although there was no original title from the Stoddard family, yet subsequent owners had undoubtedly paid a fair price for it, and she would not incur the risk of doing an act of injustice for any pecuniary consideration whatever.

"The result of this attempt to procure a title from the direct heir of the Stoddard estate, led other holders of property in the aforesaid towns to retrace their titles. Such they found to be the deficiency, and such the number and value of farms that were destitute of original titles, and such was then considered the importance of obtaining a clear title from the Stoddard estate, that another lawyer from that section of country called on my mother, and importuned her for several days to accept of fifty thousand dollars for her full and irrevocable power of attorney to act in the matter as he might hereafter deem expedient; but for reasons already assigned she absolutely declined the tempting offer.

"On taking leave of this conscientious mother for the last time, on the eve of my departure for France, she enjoined on me as the next heir after her decease, never to disturb the firesides of those who were now in quiet possession of the numerous farms aforesaid.

"Thus it will be perceived that in this world of mutability, a once opulent branch of our family became, by two untoward events in the providence of God, dispossessed of what was considered in those days a vast property.

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"But in this, as in every other event of life, we may be consoled by the conviction that every thing coöperates directly or indirectly for the accomplishment of the wise designs of that Providence who 'doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth;' and if we, the descendants of our pious grandmother, do not inherit their worldly possessions, if we can imitate their virtues, and possess their faith in the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer, we may hope, in God's good time, to possess with them an 'inheritance, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal,' and where 'all tears shall be wiped' from sorrow's eye.

"You may wish to know something of the person, appearance, and character of my grandmother Margaret Vryling. She is said to have been a tall, elegant young lady of prepossessing appearance and lady-like manners. She died when I was about eight years of age, but I recollect her face and figure perfectly when she was above eighty. She was then very upright, standing about five feet six inches high, as nearly as I can remember; a person of no ordinary appearance, and one who commanded the deference and respect of all who approached her.

"Being of the real orthodox Whitefield school, and holding the glorious truths she had imbibed from her pious, evangelical mother, she was greatly opposed to the prevailing lax or Socinian doctrines. Wishing to educate a minister who, by the grace of God, would one day preach nothing but the pure doctrines of the cross, she entreated my father and mother to place me at her disposition; and upon their acceding to her request, presented me with six thousand acres of land on Pleasant river in Maine, and eight hundred dollars in cash, to carry me through college and the theological course. From that time I was placed at the first grammar-schools, where I continued to pursue my studies with unremitting diligence and perseverance until the age of thirteen, at which time my father, on his death-bed, expressed a wish that I should enter mercantile life.

"It must here be stated that my benevolently disposed

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father, a few years before his death, merely to oblige a friend, endorsed for him to the amount of between three and four thousand pounds sterling, it being said at the time to be 'for form's sake only,' as his friend was reputed to have ample means to meet the debt at maturity. But my father, contrary to his expectations, was called upon, a year or two after, to pay the amount of the endorsement. In order to provide the means, he shipped two cargoes of potash to England, intending to apply part of the proceeds to this purpose; but the vessels and cargoes being wrecked in a storm on the coast of Ireland before the advices for insurance thereon had reached London, my father sustained a loss of some fifty thousand dollars, which swept off nearly the whole of a snug personal property which he then possessed, and obliged him to mortgage his home estate, consisting of fifteen hundred acres, in order to make out the requisite sum to pay the aforesaid bonds. His being aware, in consequence of these disastrous losses, of the circumscribed means with which his widow and fatherless children would be left, was probably his motive for changing my destination for life, thinking thereby to place me in a more advantageous position to assist the family in case of need.

"I was therefore compelled to relinquish my studies, and was immediately placed behind the counter, where, and in various mercantile operations in Europe and this country, I have passed the last sixty years of my unprofitable life."

To his mother Mr. Wilder felt that he owed much, writing, in another connection, "If I have any title to the endearing name of evangelical Christian, it is to the faithful, untiring admonitions impressed, 'line upon line, precept upon precept,' by this devoted mother, that, by the grace of God, I owe that blessing."

"Planted," as it were "in the house of the Lord," it was truly according to promise that he

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"flourished in the courts of our God," and still "brought forth fruit in old age." If the seed thus early sown did not immediately germinate, is it not to the encouragement of Christian parents that it was no doubt very much due to the influence of a pious ancestry that Mr. Wilder became so eminently one of those "trees of righteousness" of which Isaiah speaks, "the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified?"

The magnificent elm-tree of his native place, to which we compared him, now no longer remains. All the places here which once knew *him*, must now know him no more; but, transplanted to the banks of the pure river of the water of life, he lives for evermore where not even a leaf can again wither away.

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II.

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Exodus 20:12.

NEVER perhaps was this command more strictly obeyed, or the promise attached more literally fulfilled, than in the present instance. The ardor and strength of affection which all through life distinguished Mr. Wilder was very early shown towards his parents. An aged sister, now the last remaining of a family of seven, gives some recollections of him as a boy; also a few regarding his mother.

"Sampson was about thirteen years old when our father died. This made him almost sick; he mourned, and could not eat; said he could not sit down to the table without his father. I remember the funeral as if it were yesterday. It was the largest ever known in Lancaster. The procession reached from our house to the burying-ground. Sampson walked with his mother; but when we came near the grave, he rushed away from her, and people said if he had not been prevented he would have gone into the grave of the father whom he loved so well.

"Our mother was left with six children, and was so much overcome with grief as hardly to be able to take care of them. She never seemed like herself after father died. Grandfather Stoddard had given her every advantage. She had been almost worshipped in her own family, by father and mother and brothers and all. Her dress and wardrobe were always in perfect order. And she was such a good woman; so kind

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to the poor; they all came to her door knowing they would not be turned away. She would even take the clothes from her back to give to the needy. She was small and delicate in person, and my father would never let her have any unnecessary care. His death almost killed her. Sampson was always so good and obedient to her, and such a good brother too.

"After my father's death, it was necessary for my brother to go into a store. My mother chose that of 'Squire Flagg, who had been an old clerk of my father. Here he was much liked, he was so honest and reliable."

This Josiah Flagg, Esq., with whom the boy was now living, seems to have been a man of excellent judgment, in some respects resembling his uncle Benjamin Franklin. His character and advice no doubt had a decided influence upon his young clerk, who in return became one of the chief comforts of his declining years.

During Mr. Wilder's absence in Europe, Mr. Flagg looked after his mother's interests. Letters written by Mr. Flagg to Mr. Wilder at this time, about 1811 and 1812, give decided touches of the character of each of the three concerned, showing the devotion of the son, the unselfishness of the mother, the gratitude and good common-sense of the aged friend.

"You have manifested the most filial affection for your mother, in your bountiful provision for her wants. She would not suffer the money you sent to be invested in those comforts you so judiciously mentioned, but appropriated it to the education of your sister. Of the larger sum, your mother would take only the income. Said she, 'Ah, Mr. Flagg, how do we know but that poor Sampson may come

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home penniless; and shall it be said that I have spent the fruits of his earnings? No; I should never forgive myself.'"

Again Mr. Flagg writes: "The very polite and substantial proofs of your benevolence I have fully realized, and with the most heart-felt gratitude I acknowledge your disinterested friendship. Acts of benevolence which must be approved by the Creator are those when our charity is directed to objects without either sinister or interested motives. Such, my good friend, has been your munificence towards me. With tears of affection, I acknowledge the receipt of your gift. I assembled my family on the occasion; showed them your goodness. Such a picturesque scene would afford ample scope for an artist. The various emotions of gratitude, affection, joy, and all the heavenly passions commingled in the group, had you been present unobserved, would have drawn from you the exclamation, 'How richly am I rewarded for this generous act. I thank thee, O heavenly Parent, for thus enabling me to help this distressed, grateful family.' Can I say more, my dear friend, than that you have all our benedictions, and may Heaven bless you for ever."

At the age of fourteen Mr. Wilder was placed in a store at Gardner, Mass., his mother having reason to suppose that this situation offered greater advantages. This did not prove to be the case, unless as strengthening by exercise the valuable traits of character, patience and perseverance. For two years he remained without complaining, for fear of troubling his mother. But at the end of that time he concluded to leave, feeling that he ought to do so in justice to himself and those who might be dependent upon his future efforts. Engaging some one to take his place, he returned home.

"How well I remember," says his now aged sister, "when he came back, the tall, pleasant youth

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standing in the doorway, and dressed in nankeen. My mother was troubled at first; feared he had done wrong; but soon became satisfied that it was not so. Brother was always so kind to us all. Soon after this, when he was about to go to Boston to seek a place, he having already some acquaintance there, my mother offered him money. 'No,' he said, 'I cannot take it from the widow and the fatherless,' and so he always said."*

It has already been explained in part how the Stoddard and Wilder property had, in the providence of God, so melted away as to render a change of occupation necessary for the oldest son in so large a family. These losses had been still further increased through the fraud or carelessness of a relative whom Mr. Wilder's mother trusted to sell the family estate. Even her own jewelry and trinkets were in some way taken from her, some of which were afterwards found in a Boston auction-room. The man who bought the property came from Philadelphia, and kept up great style, driving with four horses to his open carriage.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest," so did the Lord, in this case, seem to have broken up Mr. Wilder's early home, that he who otherwise would probably have inherited it might be kept from laps-

* At Gardner as elsewhere, Mr. Wilder, though so young at the time of his residence there, seems to have made his mark. In 1858 there came a letter asking for an account of his life and a likeness, that both might be inserted in a history of that place about to be published.

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ing with his neighbors into a faith far from evangelical. Thanks be to God, he was preserved from this, and on the contrary became not only, as has been said, "a prince of benevolence in the church," but a stanch upholder of "the faith once delivered" to his Puritan ancestors.

All these family troubles much affected the health and spirits of Mr. Wilder's mother; but he never forgot the respect due her as a parent. He himself says, "An implicit obedience to the wishes and entreaties of a pious mother was an important link in the chain of overruling providences which led to my success in life." As in the case of Washington, obedience to a mother seems to have been the hinge upon which turned his future course.

Mr. Wilder's mother died August 3, 1818, surviving her husband twenty-five years. A friend on that occasion wrote to him in Paris:

"Her health had been for the most part as good as usual until this attack. Mrs. H—— visited her, and found her calm and cheerful, convinced that her disease was incurable. I lost no time in gratifying her with a sight of the portraits of her son and wife, which she had requested the day before. She would not permit me to leave them, for fear they should be injured.

"Her last days were full of kindness in giving advice and consolation to all around her. She directed minutely all that should be done about her property.

"You have in this event the highest consolation

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possible. Your parent was indeed one of the best. With a lofty turn of mind, she had a most benevolent heart. Her principles of religion and morality were of the purest kind. She died in the full faith and hope of salvation through her Saviour.

"You have the satisfaction to reflect that you have done the utmost you could do to testify respect and regard, and make a parent comfortable."

Mr. Wilder's sisters were all married but one, and ever received much kindness from their elder brother. There was a younger brother, but his health was feeble, and he died early.

The sisters all spoke of their brother Sampson as always good to them, but as a boy full of vivacity and sport. Indeed, all through life, the quiet vein of humor, the quick sense of the ludicrous that distinguished him, conjoined with the courtly manners natural even in early life, rendered his society fascinating to both old and young.

We have seen how truly S. V. S. Wilder honored his parents, and his days *were* long upon the land which the Lord his God gave unto him. Beautiful was the old age that crowned these well-spent days. Surely "the Lord showeth himself to be ever mindful of his covenant." Psalm 111:5.

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III.

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Deut. 16:20.

STRICT honesty and integrity, combined with energy of character, are the highways pointed out by God himself as leading to success in life. Those who honor their parents, and being just and true, are themselves worthy of honor, may expect to receive an inheritance according to the promise.

To show how trustworthy and capable the boy who, in 1797, came to Boston to look for a situation, had been considered by his employer in Gardner, and how regard for his mother's wishes affected his whole history, it is but necessary to give a few memoranda hastily taken from his own lips.

"While at Gardner, at the age of sixteen, I had been sent to Boston, about fifty miles, in charge of seven wagons of produce, which, according to commission, I sold and invested in goods. In this way I had made the acquaintance of several merchants who offered me employment in their service. Among others, were Messrs. Richardson & Walker. I partially made an arrangement to go with them, at a salary of $150 a year; but their religious sentiments were not of a kind to suit my mother, and she was entirely opposed to my taking the place.

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In compliance with her wishes, but much against my own will, I went into the store of a Mr. Henley, at a salary of $50. Here I found a home with pious people, and while here I was favored with the notice and acquaintance of Rev. Jedidiah Morse, D. D., who invited me often to his house, and put his library at my disposal, only while engaged there I was to make no noise to disturb him at his studies. In addition, he gave me some instruction on Saturday evenings."

It was a great privilege for a young man thus to have direct access to the fountain-head in this country of geographical knowledge and research; for it is well known that in this department Dr. Morse was pioneer; and well have his sons sustained the prestige of the name, transmitting it through the world of letters, telegraphing it by sea and land down to the present day.*

* "Dr. Morse was the father of American geography, having prepared and published in 1784, at New Haven, in Connecticut, a small 18mo school geography, which was the first book of geography, so far as I can learn, ever published on the American continent. In 1789 the first edition of his large Geography, in one volume 8vo, was printed in Elizabethtown, N. J., 'by Shepard Kollock, for the author.' This work was immediately reprinted in three separate editions, in England, Scotland, and Ireland. It was translated into French, and published in Paris, and into German, and published in Hamburg. It was from this work, in its successive editions, that foreigners for many years derived their chief knowledge of this country. For more than twenty years Dr. Morse's geographical works, large and small, and in the form of gazetteers, etc., were circulated more widely in the United States than those of all other geographies combined." S. E. M.

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With regard to Mr. Wilder, mark "the string of providences," as he loved to call them, which about this time entwined him, and gave direction to his earthly future. He goes on to say:

"Thus, in consequence of obeying my mother, I was brought under the notice of Dr. Morse, near whose house was Madame Henley's store; for Mr. Henley dying while I was there, the business was carried on by Madame Henley, and I became her head clerk. Through Dr. Morse, I became acquainted with Talleyrand. By Madame Henley's friends I was sent to France. Through Talleyrand I received special protection from the French government, which protection allowed of the forming, under my own roof, of various societies for the promotion of the dear Redeemer's cause in the world. It is rather a curious coincidence that Talleyrand, having been first received by Mr. Thomas Russell, and by Mr. Joseph Barrell in his mansion in Charlestown, was by them introduced to Dr. Morse, who saw much of this remarkable man, and so was prepared, when I was about sailing for France, to give me letters of introduction to him. Mr. Joseph Barrell was Mrs. Wilder's grandfather; so it proved to be."

About 1800, Mr. Barrell's spacious grounds, now covered with buildings, were an attractive place of resort, where the young Charlestown clerk would often pass a leisure hour, noticing on more than one occasion the lovely group of Mr. Barrell's grandchildren, with a miniature carriage provided for

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their amusement; little surmising that here in these gardens was growing the rose destined to adorn and render happy his existence.

Mr. Wilder never perhaps appeared in more characteristic guise than in an interview he had about this time with the younger Mr. Joseph Barrell, his future father-in-law.

"The first and the last time, as far as my recollection serves me, that I ever enjoyed the privilege and satisfaction of being personally known or speaking to my late respected father-in-law, as he afterwards proved to be in the good providence of God, was as follows:

"During the period of my clerkship in the store of Col. Henley, I one day presented a check of $1,000 to a bank in Boston of which Mr. Joseph Barrell was the cashier, and received from the paying teller two bank-notes of $500 each. On reaching our store in Charlestown, I opened the porte-monnaie with a view to proceed to the counting-room to deposit the money, when I perceived that I had three bills of $500 each, instead of two. The bills being new, had adhered together, in consequence of which the teller, it seems, had paid them out inadvertently. I at once announced the fact to my employer, who concurred with me in the propriety of immediately returning to the bank with a view to rectify the mistake.

"On reaching the bank, I at once said to the teller that I had discovered a mistake in the money which he had paid me shortly before on the check which I had presented for that purpose. Said he, 'Sir, you should have discovered the mistake before leaving the bank, as we rectify no mistakes after the persons receiving the money pass the threshold of yonder door.'

"At the same time opening my porte-monnaie, I found to my great alarm that the $500 bill which I had placed in it was gone. I at once, without saying another word, left the bank for our counting-room, when, opening my porte-mon-

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naie, which had two sides just alike, behold, there was the $500 bill safe and sound.

"I immediately returned a third time to the bank; on reaching which the teller exclaimed, 'Well, sir, come again? Shall I say to you that we rectify no mistakes here after the persons receiving the money shall have passed the threshold of yonder door?' 'Well,' said I, 'sir, I am determined not to leave this bank until the mistake is rectified.' The teller then left me to stand in the middle of the floor, and went on paying several persons who presented checks at his desk.

"After allowing me to stand for some time, the cashier, Mr. Barrell, happened to pass near the paying teller, and asked him what that young man was waiting for who had been standing so long on the floor. 'Why,' said the teller, 'he pretends that I made a mistake in paying him some money an hour or two ago, and seems not disposed to take No for an answer, when I tell him that we rectify no mistakes."

"On hearing this, the cashier, Mr. Barrell, approached me very courteously, and said, 'Young man, you perhaps are not aware that the rules of our institution forbid the teller to rectify any mistakes, pretended or otherwise, which are discovered after the persons receiving the money shall have left the premises.' I replied, 'Your teller has already announced to me that fact; but allow me to say, sir, that there is a mistake, and that justice to your institution and myself demands that I should not leave the bank until said mistake be rectified; and I shall persist in this determination, sir, whatever be your rules and regulations.'

"Speaking with rather an elevated voice, as I had become rather excited, it drew from his seat the president of the institution, and the loud discussion seemed to attract the attention of several of the clerks, who fixed their eyes upon the place where I was standing. The teller then, in answering the president's question, said I had become quite obstreperous, and evinced a disposition not to conform to the regulations of the institution. So, for the time being, I was let alone.

"When the business of the bank was about to close for

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the day, the very gentlemanly cashier, with that suavity of manner which characterized all his movements, again approached me, and said, 'Young man, have a little patience until the doors of the bank are closed, when the teller shall add up his accounts, and we will investigate and ascertain, if possible, if any mistake can be discovered.' I then made answer that, 'seeing a disposition on the part of the officers of the bank to render justice, I will not trouble the teller to have recourse to his cash account in order to investigate the matter.' I then took from my porte-monnaie the $500 bill, handing it to the cashier, and told him it had adhered to the two other bills, all of which were evidently of a new issue, and how I had discovered it, as heretofore stated.

"'What,' said he, 'may be your name, young man?' Said I, 'Names are of no consequence; my name, however, is Wilder.' 'Mr. Wilder,' said he, 'walk behind the counter and take a seat, and allow me to introduce you to the president.' 'You will excuse me, sir,' said I, 'as I have been here so long; other engagements oblige me to return forthwith to our store.'

"The president, cashier, and teller then consulting aside for a moment, the latter approached me as I was leaving the bank, and tendered me the acceptance of a fifty-dollar bill, which of course I declined, expressing a wish that in future they might not be so ready to decline rectifying a mistake.

"I little imagined at the time that the cashier herein mentioned was the honored father of her who in after years constituted the charm, the delight, and joy of my life."

Another fact of some interest is connected with Mr. Wilder while living in Charlestown, and is mentioned in the "New York Observer" of March 16, 1865, that he was the second person vaccinated in this country. Sidney E. Morse, Esq., in a private letter, gives the details as follows:

"Mr. Wilder was a clerk in Mrs. Henley's fancy silk and drygoods store in Charlestown, on the main street, about

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fifteen or twenty rods from our house, the parsonage, as early as the year 1800, and how much earlier I know not. He must have been then twenty years old. In the autumn of that year he was vaccinated by Dr. Waterhouse of Cambridge, and, I suppose, was the *first healthy* subject of vaccination in America. Dr. Waterhouse vaccinated his own son, but would not use the matter from his arm to vaccinate others, because of some disease with which his son was afflicted. Mr. Wilder was an uncommonly ruddy and healthy looking young man, and on that account, I presume, was regarded with great favor by Dr. Waterhouse for his purpose.

"When vaccination was first introduced, it met with much opposition in this country as well as in England. Many persons here believed that it would endanger the health, if not the life of the person vaccinated. Dr. Waterhouse experienced great difficulty on this account in finding persons willing to incur the risk. My father, through his correspondents in London, became satisfied that vaccination was entirely safe, and that it would be the great boon to mankind which it has proved to be. He therefore invited Dr. Waterhouse to Charlestown, with the assurance that he would find him healthy subjects for his experiment. Accordingly, when Dr. Whitehouse arrived, my father took him at once to Mrs. Henley's store, and after a representation of the case to him, Mr. Wilder without hesitation stripped up his sleeve and submitted to the operation.

"Mrs. Henley, I believe, was in Boston at the time, and was quite shocked when she heard of what had occurred in her absence.

"After vaccinating Mr. Wilder, Dr. Waterhouse returned to my father's house, and vaccinated me and my brother Richard. I was then only six and a half years old, but I have a vivid remembrance of the scene, and of the cries of my brother Richard when the doctor scraped his arm and pricked it with the lancet. My recollections are distinct. I remember the corner of the parlor in which he stood, the old Willard family clock, the chairs, and the group of persons around him."

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A venturesome offering this on the altar of progressive science by the truly wise and far-sighted father. The vaccination proved effectual in Mr. Wilder's case, as it has since then in so many others, although he was again and again exposed to both varioloid and small-pox in the course of his many voyages.

There was another clerk in Madame Henley's establishment, James Ferson. In 1848, he, after a cessation of intercourse of fifty years, wrote to Mr. Wilder, giving some account of himself and family, and asking for similar information in return. The following is from Mr. Wilder's reply:

"My dear old Shopmate—Near fifty years have rolled away since I last beheld your face in the flesh. I had supposed you were among the dead with most of my early associates in Charlestown. Judge then of my delightful surprise on receiving your much valued favor, and hearing that your brothers were devoted evangelical Christians, and that you are animated by the same hope, cheered by the same delightful prospects, relying on the same gracious promises, and looking to the same divine Saviour with myself for salvation. . . . To go into details of my pilgrimage through this wilderness world would require volumes."

An interesting incident, given in his own words, occurred during the latter part of Mr. Wilder's clerkship with Madame Henley.

"For the information and advantage of my grandsons, and other young men who are approaching the period when

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they will be called upon to enter on the stern realities of active life, and, exempt from the legal control of parental authority, will assume the responsibility of acting for themselves, I relate the following incident:

"I had completed the term of my clerkship, or as it was called in those days, apprenticeship, in the respectable mercantile house of Col. Henley in Charlestown, whose widow was a sister of the great merchant prince of that day, Thomas Russell, and was also sister-in-law of the distinguished merchant John Codman, who married another sister of Thomas Russell, and was the honored father of the late Rev. Dr. Codman.

"Having enjoyed the great advantage of being personally known to these distinguished families, and being then engaged in winding up the concerns of my late employers, preparatory to commencing business on my own account, an old country customer called at our store one morning, and after having made a selection of several articles which we still had on hand, and wishing, in order to complete his assortment, half a bale of Russia duck, which we had not, I told him that he might calculate upon having it at the time he was to call for the other articles, which was at one o'clock.

"I soon left for Boston, in order to obtain the article wanted. Having purchased it, and not meeting with the truckman who usually transported at noon the merchandise that was ready to be taken over to Charlestown, I engaged a young man with a wheelbarrow to take over the bale of duck. After accomplishing my other business, I proceeded on my return home. On reaching Back-street, leading to Charlestown bridge, I perceived the young man sitting upon the wheelbarrow, quite overpowered by the tremendous heat of the day, and unable to proceed any further.

"Having promised the goods at one o'clock, and it being already half-past twelve, and no time to be lost, I immediately seized the wheelbarrow, dressed as I was in Nankeen small-clothes, with silk stockings, white Marseilles vest, a striped gingham coat, and a white fur hat.

"Thus I was propelling along the wheelbarrow when overtaken by Mr. Codman on horseback. 'What,' said he, 'Mr.

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Wilder turned truckman?' 'Why,' said I, 'sir, I have promised these goods to be ready for a customer at one o'clock at our store, and am determined not to disappoint him, and this young man being quite overcome by the intense heat, it only remained for me to assume his place.' 'Good, good!' said Mr. Codman, and rode on over the bridge and called at his sister-in-law's at our store. Said he, 'I witnessed a scene just now, in coming over the bridge, which afforded me much satisfaction, being nothing less than observing your head clerk with a wheelbarrow loaded with a heavy package, which it seems he had promised a customer of yours to be delivered at one o'clock, and it now wants but twenty minutes. I understand,' said he, 'that that young man is about commencing business for himself. You may say to him on his arrival, that such is my approval of the energy of character which he has displayed in not hesitating to wheel the barrow himself rather than disappoint a customer, that when he commences business my name is at his service for thirty thousand dollars, so long as he does not endorse for others.'

"He immediately mounted his horse on his return, when he again met me on Charlestown-square, still propelling the wheelbarrow. 'Good, good!' said he again, and continued his route.

"On reaching the store, I found the customer there with his other goods packed, and only waiting for the duck, which arrived just in time to be loaded on the team with the other articles. Although very much heated from overexertion and exposure in the sun, the heat was not a little allayed on being told of the estimate with which Mr. Codman had regarded me from this transaction, and the promises which he had made in my behalf.

"A few months after, I commenced business in Boston on my own account, and although I never availed myself of the facilities offered by Mr. Codman, yet he consigned to me, a few months after, a cargo of Russia sheetings, diapers, and ducks, which I shortly disposed of on commission, which amounted to upwards of three thousand dollars, with the sales of which he was so well satisfied, that it led to two or three similar consignments during the first year of my busi-

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ness, and which resulted in the aggregate to a gain of over ten thousand dollars."

Let the young profit by this example, and make the prayer of David their own: "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me." Psa. 25 : 21. Let them ever have courage to do what is right and necessary; and let them only "be ashamed who transgress without cause." Psa. 25 : 3.

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IV.

Wise men lay up Knowledge. Prov. 5:4.

REFERENCE has already been made to Mr. Wilder's early destination for the ministry by his pious grandmother, and his attending the best grammar-schools with a view to that most noble of all human employment; and also to the change rendered necessary by his father's loss of property and early death. But though his school-life, properly so called, was so early interrupted, it is not to be understood that he enjoyed no further advantages for education. Informal at first as the instruction may have been, this could not in truth be said of any pupil of Dr. Morse, whose kindness has already been mentioned. The impetus given by such a friend to a mind combining ardor and perseverance with good common-sense, no doubt affected Mr. Wilder's mental habits through life.

In answer to some inquiries, Sidney E. Morse, Esq., writes, "In November, 1801, my father established a Saturday evening lecture in Charlestown, for the religious instruction of the youth of his parish, taking the Westminster Assembly's Catechism as his text-book. This lecture was soon attended by more than two hundred young people. It was renewed in the autumn of 1802 and 1803, with an increase in the number of attendants to three and

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four hundred, and evidently with good effect; more than one hundred persons having been added to my father's church during three years at this period of his ministry. Mr. Wilder seems to have been prominent among the young men who promoted this enterprise, as he was one of the committee who addressed a letter to my father, accompanied with a handsome gift, expressing their gratitude for the services he had rendered them." The substance of this committee's letter to Dr. Morse, and his reply, are subjoined.

"CHARLESTOWN, Oct., 1802.

"MOST REVEREND SIR—We beg leave to approach you with sentiments of grateful regard, and offer you our highest acknowledgments for your unremitted and disinterested exertions in our behalf: our best wishes and our highest gratitude are but a reasonable return for privileges so inestimable. And while we sincerely wish you health and happiness in this world, our united prayers are offered for your inheritance of that felicity which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.

"In behalf of the young gentlemen who have attended the Saturday evening lectures, we have the honor to be, reverend sir, your sincere and grateful friends,

"A. R. THOMPSON,
"SAMPSON V. S. WILDER,
"CHARLES TUTTLE,
} COMMITTEE."

"CHARLESTOWN, Oct., 1802.

"MY YOUNG FRIENDS—These evidences of your kind regard and of your gratitude for attentions on my part to your religious improvement, and which I have paid with heartfelt satisfaction, have yielded me no common pleasure. The affectionate attachment you so kindly express towards me, my young friends, I can and do most cordially reciprocate. The respectful and handsome manner in which your address has been penned and presented does honor to your under-

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standings, and the sentiments you express do equal credit to the sensibilities of your hearts.

"Truly I am your affectionate pastor and friend,

"JEDIDIAH MORSE."

Before the time of these lectures, Mr. Wilder must have entered upon a rigid course of self-improvement. A full and appropriate letter, which he wrote to his mother, Jan. 1, 1800, on the death of Washington, shows that, at the age of twenty, his mind had had the discipline of much reading and study.

In August, 1801, he wrote a letter of advice to a younger sister, the style of which would have been appropriate as coming from her grandfather, rather than from a brother of twenty-one years. But this brother being the eldest, felt that he must take the place of a father to the younger children. The first part of the letter consists of what would now be called an old-fashioned disquisition upon the three virtues of "fortitude or patience, humility, and resignation," and their opposite vices. This is written much in the manner of the better Greek and Roman moralists, and shows distinctly that at this time the writer had not even begun to know the Lord Jesus Christ as he is, divine, personal, in whom is revealed to us that God who in this letter is spoken of as an ancient philosopher might have written, merely as "the Author of our being," "under whose eye" we are, to whose "providence the mind should resign itself, and triumph in his approbation."

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The name "Jesus," which was Mr. Wilder's especial theme in after life, and which even in death it was his wish to "sound so loud that all the earth might hear," is not even alluded to in the whole production. At the same time, the precepts inculcated are excellent, only wanting that grand motive power which the love of Jesus alone can supply.

By a course of useful, systematic reading, early commenced and continued into the busy days of commercial life, Mr. Wilder attained a degree of general information and knowledge of English literature not always possessed by gentlemen in mercantile business. At a later period he says, "Considering the circumscribed advantages for intellectual improvement under which I labored during my youthful years, if I have acquired a superficial knowledge which allows me to pass in the crowd without precisely disgracing my erudite friends, it must be ascribed, with the blessing of God, to exertions made during the meridian of life." He highly estimated the ability to write a good letter. A few of his own will be introduced in these pages, as occasion may demand. In language they were often euphonious; in style clear, though at times involved through redundancy of expression; in manuscript unmistakably neat and beautiful. His unique signature, early adopted, always seemed significantly appropriate. But the crowning charm of all his letters was the almost never-failing reference in them to his Master's cause. It seems as if

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he "would His love" record on "every fleeting" page.

His addresses also on various public occasions evidently showed culture of mind as well as benevolence of heart.

True education, after all, is that which best prepares us for the life beyond the present. The most important problem to be solved is what it profits a man to gain his own soul. As Mr. Wilder's mind, emerging from a state of comparative indifference to the great truths of religion, became more enlightened, he the more strongly felt the superior worth of that wisdom which is from above, in comparison with mere literary cultivation. The Bible became to him the book it is. In the society of a humble Christian he found more congeniality than in that of the merely learned, however great and distinguished. How truly would he pity those who, "ignorant of their danger, ignorant of a Saviour dying to redeem them," were "ignorant of all that pertained to their eternal peace." He felt increasingly that this alone was in fact to be desired, "to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Eph. 3 : 19.

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V.

The hand of the diligent maketh rich. Prov. 10 : 4.

Mr. Wilder remained as clerk with Mrs. Henley until, her affairs being closed up, he went into business on his own account in Boston. This was in 1802. His store was in Court-street. The partnership Mr. Wilder formed at this time proved in the end an unfortunate one; yet for a time the reasonable expectations he had formed of success were more than realized, and in the course of it, by the providence of God, he was led to Europe, where was laid the foundation of his future success. Nor did this providence act even apparently in an arbitrary way. Mr. Wilder's great promptness and strict integrity, added to his knowledge of the business required, seem to have been the natural stepping-stones to his life in France, at a time too when there was little commercial intercourse between that country and ours.

The circumstances attending Mr. Wilder's leaving this country are here condensed from his own account of them.

"John Codman, of wheelbarrow memory, had a brother Richard, who had resided in France, and had occasionally consigned French goods to his brother John, who, being in the Russia trade, did not well understand them, and so always sent them to his sister Mrs. Henley for sale. Having consequently had much experience with these French goods,

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it is not vanity for me to say I became a better judge of them than the merchants in English goods about me were likely to be.

"One day a gentleman named Allan Melville came to Boston with an invoice of $30,000 worth of French goods, which he wished to dispose of as a whole and at once for cash. They consisted of silks, satins, lutestrings, sarcenets, cambrics, thread laces, shawls, silk and kid gloves, hosiery, ribbons, artificial flowers, suspenders, fans, perfumery, ornamental combs, and other fancy articles. I went to see the goods, and found the price of them estimated at so many cents the livre Tounois, an old Bourbon coin of a currency few or none understood who had not been in the habit of dealing in French goods. I at once perceived that these goods were charged at from ten to fifteen and even twenty per cent. less than those which Richard Codman had been in the habit of sending to this country, and that consequently very satisfactory profits could be realized on them and quick sales no doubt effected. But I had a large stock of goods in my own store, and no ready money for the cash payment required.

"A day or two after, standing with a gentleman in State-street, I expressed my regret that I had not $30,000 with which to buy a lot of goods on which money could be made. 'Well,' said he, 'if you are confident of this, there stands on the other side of the street the millionaire William Gray of Salem, who has ample means for any operation where money is to be made without any great outlay of funds. Now,' said he, 'I will introduce you to Mr. Gray on condition that you will occupy my large salesrooms to open the cases and display the goods, allowing me one third of the profits, and offering Mr. Gray another third. In your retail-store in Court-street there is no room to show such goods properly.'

"'Well,' said I, 'come right over and introduce me to Mr. Gray.' No sooner said, than for the first time in my life I was introduced to this merchant prince. After stating to him my views in full about the purchase I wished to make, also that the whole transaction could be wound up within sixty days, I finished by offering him one third of the profits

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on condition of his furnishing the money required in ten days after the delivery of the goods.

"'Ah,' said he, 'young men are apt to be very sanguine, and I am not prepared to respond without further consideration.' 'Why, sir,' said I, 'I feel confident there can be no loss,' and repeated my reasons for this opinion. The gentleman who had introduced me standing by, then observed that he had offered me the use of his store, and that he himself should not hesitate to trust me with any amount of goods.

"'Well,' said Mr. Gray, 'as the young man seems to be so confident of success, I will try him. And when, sir,' turning to me, 'will the money be wanted?' 'In ten days,' said I. 'Well,' said he, 'I suppose you must count upon it.'

"I immediately left Mr. Gray, went and closed the bargain with Melville, had the goods delivered the following morning, and advertised and ready for sale the same day.

"There were other merchants hoping by delay to obtain Mr. Melville's invoice at a lower rate, who being disappointed, spread a report that I had paid too much, and this came to Mr. Gray's ears before he returned to Salem.

"But customers began to throng the store in State-street. I was obliged to employ extra clerks. Suffice it to say, that in five days every case of goods was sold except three, which I took to my own account. At the end of a week the money was all realized, and I went at once and paid Mr. Melville. I also prepared a receipt for one third of the profits, $1,875, ready for Mr. Gray to sign.

"Perceiving the next morning, it being the ninth day from the purchase of the goods, that Mr. Gray had alighted from his carriage at the door of his counting-house in Congress-street, I went there with the money and receipt, thinking agreeably to surprise Mr. Gray. On reaching his office, however, instead of being cordially received, Mr. Gray, walking up and down his room, and surrounded by his clerks, exclaimed, 'Ah, young man, I did a very foolish thing in assenting to go into that operation, in which they say much money will be lost; and besides, it is only the ninth day, and you told me you would not need the money for ten days, and I shall not pay you one cent to-day, sir. Call to-morrow, and

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I suppose I must give you the money; and I now therefore, as I am very busy, bid you good-morning.' Said I, 'Mr. Gray, before leaving your office, I must request you to do me the favor to sign this paper.' Said he, 'Young man, I shall sign no papers until at least to-morrow.' 'Well,' said I, 'Mr. Gray, you must excuse me, sir, but I do not leave your office until you sign this paper.' Being somewhat excited when I said it, I attracted the attention of the clerks, among whom was Mr. Bates, with the pen back of his ear, who is now at the head of the banking-house of Baring & Co., London.

"Mr. Gray, still continuing to walk up and down his office, turned to me again and said, 'It is of no use, young man, for you to stand there, as I shall sign no papers.' 'But,' said I, 'Mr. Gray, do you object to cast your eye on the paper and see its purport?' 'Why,' said he, 'it is really too bad to have one's time taken up in this way. There are two ships I have to despatch for sea this afternoon. Here,' said he, reaching out his hand and putting on his specs, 'let me see the paper.' He then began reading it aloud. 'Received of S. V. S. Wilder'—'received!' said he, 'I've received nothing,' and was on the point of handing back the paper. Said I, 'Read on, if you please, Mr. Gray.' 'Received eighteen hundred and seventy-five dollars;'—'eh, eh?'—'it being my proportion of profits?' 'Yes,' said I, 'I've sold the goods, all but three small cases I take myself, and here is the money,' handing it over to the clerks to count. 'What!' said he, 'and you want no money of me to-morrow?' 'No, sir,' said I; 'I sold for ready cash, with which I have paid Mr. Melville. You have one third of the profits counted down, sir.' 'And you want no money from me?' 'No, sir; it's all settled, as you perceive.'

"'Why, Mr. Wilder, walk into my private counting-room. Do you ever come to Salem?' 'No, sir,' said I; 'and all I ask of you, sir, is to sign the receipt, and as I have other pressing engagements, excuse me from coming into your counting-room.' 'Well,' said he, 'come down and pass a week with us, and allow me to introduce you to my family.' Thanking him, I left, perhaps a little exultant on account of the nuts he had allowed me the opportunity of cracking."

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So even commerce has its romance, and on the dry yard-stick are sometimes found, though in unpromising shells, kernels of true humor, for enjoying which the upright young merchant of 1802 may be excused.

It was, under God, Mr. Wilder's fastidious honesty in thus making a payment of profits, the legal necessity of which might be questioned, superadded to his energy and the knowledge shown by him of French goods, which in November, 1802, led Mr. Gray to propose to him to become his agent in Europe. Mr. Wilder was taken by surprise. He had never thought of leaving this country, had no acquaintance with the French language, and was quietly pursuing his own business in Court-street.

Mr. Gray's offer was tempting, not on account of a large per centage of profits, but from the large sums of money—large for that day—to be handled. Funds were to be collected at Nantes, Bordeaux, Marseilles, and elsewhere, and invested in goods to the best advantage: also in Leghorn, Naples, Trieste, Gottenberg, and other places. Crapes and sewing-silks were to be bought in Italy.

Mr. Wilder declined taking a single step without consulting his "honored mother;" but having received her consent, finally concluded an arrangement with Mr. Gray, and "set sail on board the old ship Elizabeth, Capt. Silbee, in which the now millionaire John Bryant of Boston went also as supercargo." We give Mr. Wilder's own account of the passage.

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"Even the cabin was so filled up with freight, with bags of pepper and coffee, that Bryant and myself could not reach our berths without creeping on our hands and knees. These inconveniences were characteristic of what passengers to Europe at that time often endured. After passing the banks of Newfoundland in a violent storm, both Bryant and myself had to take our turns with the sailors at the pumps during forty odd days, until we reached the port of Nantes, where the old ship Elizabeth was condemned as unseaworthy.

"Proceeding from Nantes to Bordeaux, I there invested what funds were at my disposition in such manufactures as I found in that place, and finally reached Paris on the very day and hour on which Napoleon was proclaimed emperor on twelve squares of the city. The fountains were all running wine from morning till night. A distribution of thousands of legs of mutton, roast fowls, and loaves of bread was made, enough to satisfy the cravings of 800,000 people.

"I immediately commenced by engaging the celebrated language-master Latour Moubrey, to instruct me in the French language. He came to my lodgings every morning at sunrise. Latour Moubrey spoke fluently at that time seven languages. He afterwards became the private secretary of Napoleon, and was by his side generally in all his battles, and followed him during the disastrous campaign to and from Moscow. He finally died of a broken heart, on account of not being allowed by the government to go with Napoleon into exile.

"Without going into details as to my business transactions, suffice it to say that before one year I found myself giving regular employment to upwards of twelve hundred persons, and shipping goods to the amount of some millions of francs; having cleared for Mr. Gray, during the first eighteen months, some sixty thousand dollars, and for our own house upwards of half that sum.

"But such prosperity was too much for my weak-headed partner. Becoming intimate with several dissipated young men of the first families, he became in a degree unqualified for business; and intoxicated as he was with success, he often became more so with large potations of eau de vie, and ran

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into all sorts of personal and family extravagance. Hearing of these events, I hurried home, dissolved the connection, sold off the stock of goods, and settled up the concern at the sacrifice of thirty-seven thousand dollars, which I had the means to sustain without much injury to myself. In six weeks I reëmbarked, with new orders to execute for Mr. Gray; also for Israel Thorndyke; also for William Bartlett of Newburyport. These were then the three wealthiest houses in New England."

Mr. Wilder did not learn the lesson he might have done from the failure of this first business connection. It must be confessed that this is not the only instance in the course of his life where his own interests severely suffered from his taking it for granted, even after bitter experience to the contrary, that every one must of course be as large-hearted and as honest as himself.

He remained in Europe this second time until 1807, when, the French ports being blockaded by English fleets, rendering business very hazardous, he returned for a short time to this country. A few items as to his business relations may here be added.

For three or four years Mr. Wilder had few competitors in trade, and quite forestalled the supply for the American market, having in his employ all the best and cheapest manufactories of goods suited to this country; and this not only in Paris, but in the various departments of France. Other Americans began to arrive, among them Henry Higginson, brother of the wealthy Stephen Higginson of Boston. Henry Higginson, finding Mr. Wilder was about to return to America, wrote to his brother to engage him as purchasing agent, saying that he could buy goods fifteen or twenty per cent. cheaper than any one else, and that he himself should leave France, and become a banker in London.

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Arrived in Boston, Mr. Gray now wished Mr. Wilder to become agent for him exclusively, offering a larger premium on investments than before, namely, three per cent. Mr. Wilder thought that, from his experience and virtual command of the French market, the rate should be higher, at least five per cent.; but Mr. Gray would not consent to this. Thus matters rested for two or three weeks. In the mean time he had numerous offers from others, among them Stephen Higginson, who, not very judiciously perhaps, showed his brother's letter advising that Mr. Wilder's services should be secured at even ten per cent., and this without confining him to purchase for their house alone. With regard to this, Mr. Wilder says:

"Having done so much business for Mr. Gray, I rather preferred remaining with him, and waited upon him again, saying I had other offers, and would be glad to decide upon them. He would give no more than three per cent., and I bade him good-afternoon. I would have taken my old offer of five per cent. from him.

"I then called on Mr. Higginson, who in the mean time had taken in Mr. John Tappan to participate in the proposed arrangement. Mr. Tappan made some restrictions which I considered equitable, and I acceded to them, and began making preparations for departure.

"A week after came a line from Mr. Gray, very anxious to see me at his office. On arriving there, 'Well,' said he, 'Mr. Wilder, have you thought better of my proposed arrangement with you?' I observed that 'at our last interview I had considered the matter settled by his declining to agree to my proposition, and that I had accordingly concluded arrangements with other houses.' 'Have you reduced it to writing?' said he. 'No,' said I, 'but I consider my word the same as my bond.' 'Well,' said he, 'if there is any thing that is not definitely settled, I will allow you four per cent.' Said I, 'Mr. Gray, I extremely regret that you had not sooner come to that conclusion, for such was my desire to continue with you, that I might possibly have acceded to your views; but now, sir, not even five per cent. or more would induce me to swerve from the engagement I have made.'

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"On hearing this, Mr. Gray, turning towards Bates, said to him, 'Hold yourself in readiness, sir, to proceed to Europe.' This was the turning-point in Mr. Bates' life and fortunes."

Mr. Wilder himself soon returned to France, to fulfil the new engagements he had made.

Thus we see him fairly installed in the French metropolis. We have yet to trace how, through grace, he became "a burning and a shining light" in the midst of a population so wholly given to the busy scenes and pleasures of this world. The candlestick was now placed in its socket, but the flame of the candle not yet kindled.

It may be stated in this connection, that in the course of twenty years Mr. Wilder crossed the ocean sixteen times. No mere pleasure-trips these in those days; no mere crossings of a gigantic ferry, which they have now become; but long, tedious, patience-killing voyages were they, of from forty to eighty days duration, and fraught with danger from storm and iceberg. To give the date and particulars of each with historic verity would be of little moment.

We may think of the traveller as also gradually sailing into middle life, sometimes embarking at one port, then at another; sometimes going as bearer of despatches in time of war, in those days not a nominal affair, but one of risk and real service to the government; again stealing back to England via Lisbon, having strange visions sent him on the way to vindicate his then strict observance of the Sabbath; for in the course of these years he had also begun his journey towards heaven.

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Strange old passports, worn by use, but valuable now for mere antiquity as well as for the autographs of distinguished officials of those early days, with which they are signed and countersigned to excess, are found among the papers of the then young traveller, who is described in them in a way those who knew him only in his latter years can easily imagine to have been correct.

But he has passed now beyond the need of any earthly permit. The last river is crossed in safety. It was Jesus who held for him, as he does for all his people, the keys of death and the grave. To gain the blissful shores where he now abides, he needed but one passport, the blood of Christ.

In even imperfect communion with Christ and his people, we can sometimes faintly imagine a little of what is the true luxury that now surrounds him, infinitely beyond the best of earth. There it is revealed to us, "there shall be no more sea," no more waves and tumults; but thy people, Lord, shall for ever rest in thee.

As these words are written, comes sounding in the news that our land too has rest—has peace again. Thanks be to God, and to him alone. Does not the glad-tidings, "Peace on earth," again resound from angelic tongues, as once it did in Bethlehem, and echo and reëcho from the heavenly hills, until those who cannot, without losing identity itself, forget the country, the home on earth they so much loved, rejoice anew in this fresh proof of the goodness of their God and ours?

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VI.

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. Hosea 6:3.

THE twenty years from 1803 to 1823, which have been spoken of as marked by Mr. Wilder's sixteen voyages to and fro on the Atlantic, were, as may well be imagined, not devoid of many matters of still deeper interest. In the early part of them his future, both for time and for eternity, became more definitely shaped, and in the later are found some of the most important years of his life. We now consider the events connected with what may more strictly be called his early religious history.

The same principles of probity which guided Mr. Wilder's course in commercial life regulated his duty to his Creator. Not to Cæsar only, but to God would he render the things which are due.

Referring to the *early part* of his residence abroad, Mr. Wilder wrote, "In France I was a moral man. That is all that can be said." Would that as much as this could be said of every young American similarly situated. So numerous have Americans now become upon the continent, that a young man there cannot quite break away from home influence and home public sentiment; and yet, alas, how many fall!

In 1812 Mr. Wilder made a public profession of

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religion in Boston, connecting himself with the Summer-street church. With regard to this he says:

"I had always intended to join the church when I returned finally to this country. What led me to this resolution was the text, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.' Luke 9:26. I thought all churches pretty much alike. I had never heard of a prayer-meeting.

"The immediate cause of my joining the church was, however, as follows. On board Captain Hall's ship, during a tremendous storm on the way to France, a scene presented itself that made me tremble. The waves swept the deck. Several men were washed away by them. I then and there made a solemn resolve, that if the Lord would bring me safely to land, I would consecrate myself to him by joining the church immediately upon my landing in America. I did not wish to join the Oratoire in Paris, because it was Socinian. In this country I knew no difference in churches. Unitarianism was not yet developed, nor was it until two years later, at the time of the controversy between Channing and Stuart. Consequently I thought all was right about the Boston churches. There was much piety among individual members of them. My own views were not distinct.

"I could not but remark that, in one hour from the time I made my vow, the sea became calm, and the sailors all right and cheerful again.

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"Upon my next arrival in Boston, Dr. Morse having gone to Charleston, S. C., I went to see Rev. Mr. Thatcher, of the Summer-street church, or rather, I went to his door; for, arrived there, my courage failed me to knock. I thought, 'What will the world say, to see a young man just from Paris join the church?' I left after having my hand on the knocker.

"Soon after, I went to see my friends in the country. At Worcester the landlord said to me, 'There is a gentleman up stairs very sick; will you see him? He is from Boston.' I went up, and to my surprise found it was Mr. Thatcher, pale, and seemingly at the gates of death, from an attack of bleeding at the lungs. I knew him, having often been at his church with friends attending there. I resolved, if he were restored, I would, *coute qu'il coute*, join the church. He recovered.

"Soon after this, hearing at Mr. Higginson's that if any one wished to join the church, the day was coming to be propounded for it, I ran to Mr. Thatcher's door with all my might, and gave such a knock that the girl came running to the door exclaiming, 'What? what? what?' supposing there was a fire; and Mr. Thatcher himself came out of his study. I told him my story. He wept like a child, and seemed too very happy; but he asked me no questions, made no examination, at which I felt disappointed, having expected it. He only put down my name as one to come forward at the next communion.

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"When the Sabbath came to do this, I remember my feelings perfectly. I had hoped it would rain, so as to prevent a large attendance; but the day was fine, and the élite of Boston present. But no sooner was my name called, and I stood in the broad aisle, than all fear of man vanished, and I could have faced ten thousand worlds. I can truly say that never from that time have I been ashamed of the Lord Jesus."

Surely, O Lord, "thou meetest him that worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." Isaiah 64:5. It is said of the ten lepers, "As they *went*, they were cleansed." Luke 17:14.

"Rev. Mr. Thatcher came out afterwards to France, and died there in Toulon. In view of death, he expressed much regret on account of a sermon he had preached and published on the 'unity of God,' fearing it had done harm. He was a man of devout feelings."

A friend states that at the time of Mr. Wilder's making this profession of religion, "he was considered a very correct young man. It was thought remarkable that he would not even go to the post-office on Sunday. His doctrinal views were not clear, but he was in practice most conscientious."

With regard to the outward character here described as so excellent, we are irresistibly led, in view of Mr. Wilder's subsequent Christian life, to notice still further fulfilments of God's precious promises—that "to him who ordereth his conversation aright," he will show his salvation. Psalm

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50:23. To him thus doing "his will" by owning his name before men, he did soon make known "the doctrine." John 7:17. Would that all, like Mr. Wilder in 1812, would follow what light they have. It would lead them to a clearer shining of the truth; it would lead them, as it has done him now, to the perfect day, refulgent for ever in heaven with the inspiring rays of the Sun of righteousness.

Mr. Wilder, during his brief visits to New York from 1809 onward, though lodging at the City Hotel, would often visit his friend David L. Dodge, to whom he felt he owed much for his kind, Christian advice and encouragement, and in whose children and grandchildren, rejoicing in their prosperity and benevolence, he ever took much interest. Through Mr. Dodge, Mr. Wilder became acquainted with Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller, then settled in the Wall-street church. The following letters passing between Dr. Miller and Mr. Wilder in 1826, show how, probably about or before 1813, this eminent servant of Christ was made the instrument of "expounding" to the then young disciple "the way of God more perfectly."

"PRINCETON, N. J., Feb. 17, 1820.

"MY DEAR SIR—Though it is a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you, yet my small acquaintance with you was contracted under circumstances so extremely interesting to my feelings, that I have followed you with many inquiries during your residence in Europe; and have been happy

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to hear from time to time of your welfare. This letter is written under the impression that you still reside in the city of Paris.

"In the year 1813 I removed from the city of New York, where you heard me preach, in consequence of being chosen by the General Assembly of our church 'Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government' in the 'Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian church' at this place. Here I have resided ever since, and have been favored by a gracious Providence with much health and comfort in my new employment. I preach every Sabbath; but my principal work is in conducting, with the aid of a colleague, the theological studies of near seventy candidates for the holy ministry.

"My object, my dear sir, in addressing you at present, is to endeavor, through your kind agency, to obtain two or three books which I greatly need in the discharge of my official duties, but which I cannot procure in any of the bookstores in this country, and which I have not been able to obtain even in England.* I hope, sir, you will pardon my giving you this trouble. If they cannot be had in Paris, I shall be almost ready to despair of getting them.

"And now, my dear sir, having despatched the business which prompted me to write, allow me, before I close, to advert with fraternal freedom to

* They were the works of Theodore Beza and David Blondel.

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the state of mind in which I once saw you, and to express the hope that your exercises have issued in that 'joy and peace in believing' which appeared *then* to be the object of your earnest pursuit. Since that time you have seen much of the gay and splendid world, and have had, I doubt not, many new proofs of its vanity and emptiness. It would give me great pleasure to know that, amid all this vanity and emptiness, you have found the 'pearl of great price,' and have 'chosen that good part which can never be taken away from you.'

"From a variety of circumstances concerning you which have reached me, I trust this is the case. If it *be so*, the best wish I can form for you is, that you may 'daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' If *not*, allow a friend, many hundred miles from you, but who has often borne you on his heart before the throne of grace, to remind you of the infinite importance of this great subject, and to press it upon your renewed and prayerful attention. The external advantages indeed which you now enjoy for spiritual improvement are comparatively small; but with access to the precious book of God and the throne of grace, you cannot be essentially at a loss.

"Praying that the God of all grace may be with you and bless you, I am, dear sir, your sincere friend,

"SAMUEL MILLER."

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"PARIS, April 8, 1820.

"REV. SAMUEL MILLER, Princeton:

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR—Your kind and affectionate letter of February 17 has been read with emotions known only to myself. The sentiments you therein express are truly refreshing to my soul. Yes, sir, it was through you, as the instrument under Providence, and by the aid of divine grace, that I became confirmed in the realities of that glorious gospel which I have since found is so wisely calculated to afford peace, comfort, and consolation under every trial of life, and which, by adhering to its principles and practice, will, I trust, through the righteousness of Christ, secure to me an abode in those blessed mansions of rest which our divine Redeemer has gone forward to prepare for all his followers.

"The longer I reside in this city of vice and infidelity, and the more I see of the imperfections attached to our frail natures, the more I am led, each succeeding day of my life, to view with increased gratitude the great work of redemption through the blood of a crucified Redeemer. Christ does appear to me to be the only refuge. His righteousness is my only hope.

"Oh, my dear sir, do continue to offer your prayers in my behalf, that I may cultivate, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, a livelier faith in this dear Saviour, whose name I have so often heard pronounced from your lips with so much joy.

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"You are engaged, sir, in a most delightful employ—that of preparing instruments to promote the glorious cause of our Saviour, and I rejoice to hear that Providence continues to smile on your institution. I pray that he may bless your exertions, and that the heart of each of the young men you are preparing for the sacred ministry may become imbued with the riches of divine grace, and thereby be enabled to preach the truth 'as it is in Jesus;' and when they shall have done serving their Lord and Master here on earth, that they may rejoice with you in the realms of endless felicity.

"It will be, dear sir, both my duty and pleasure to procure for you the books which you desire, provided they can be found in this city or Geneva, and as soon as I can ascertain the fact I shall write you and forward in conformity.

"In gratitude to you, sir, and in love to our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I salute you, and remain, with Christian affection and respect,

"Truly your obliged friend and obedient servant,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

The above letters speak for themselves. There is no other record; but a dear friend states that Mr. Wilder often expressed his deep obligations to Dr. Miller.*

* At the anniversary of the American Tract Society in 1840, Mr. Wilder occupied the chair, supported by Rev. Dr. Miller as Vice-president, and Rev. Dr. James Milnor as Chair-

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Oh, the meeting on the heights above of the teacher and the taught, both having learned Christ, both now alike rich in experience of the goodness of our God through Him on whom alone they depended, and in whom they have now found actual and full salvation.

man of the Executive Committee; and it was remarked by many that rarely if ever were three presiding officers seen together of equal personal elegance and beauty. They were past middle age, but with a rosy freshness and healthfulness of countenance seldom met in gentlemen of their years.

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VII.

In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths. Prov. 3 : 6.

THE year 1812 was a marked one in Mr. Wilder's history. Not only did he then publicly profess himself to be on the Lord's side, but in this year was laid the foundation of his future happiness in domestic life. To give the details of a courtship most characteristic, and replete with delicate refinement of feeling, might add much to the interest of these pages, but this of course cannot be done. Mr. Wilder loved in after years to trace the course of it all as guided by an overruling Providence. The war with England detaining him in this country for several months; the laming of a favorite horse changing completely a plan of travel; the New Hampshire snow-storm blocking up his way when turning his steps in that direction; the letter of introduction to a lady in Northampton, which he came near not delivering—these were some of the circumstances which led to an acquaintance with and subsequent marriage, June 15, 1814, to Miss Electa Barrell, then living with her widowed mother in Northampton, Mass.

Of the wedding itself, it may be allowed to give a few particulars, condensed from a letter written in

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1860 to one of his daughters on his wedding anniversary.

"As soon as the ceremony was performed by the Rev. Parson Williams, we entered our carriage in company with aunt S—— and her daughter, and after proceeding almost three miles on our way to Pittsfield, on looking back we were surprised to perceive that we were followed by an array of carriages.

"On stopping to allow the first carriage to approach, containing Judge H—— and lady, I exclaimed, 'What means all this, Judge?' 'It means,' said he, 'that some of your numerous friends in our village are determined to see you and your interesting bride safely for a few miles on the commencement of your journey of life, and that there are thirty vehicles containing sixty persons in the cortege.' On hearing this, and aware that they had all left the village before dinner, I asked if there were any hotels near by. The judge replied that the word hotel was probably unknown in that region, but that there was a 'White Pine Tavern' located about three miles ahead.

"I at once directed our coachman to drive on with speed, leaving Judge H—— and the other distinguished élite of Northampton to follow. On arriving at said 'White Pine Tavern,' the landlady presenting herself at the door, I said, 'My good woman, I want you to prepare a dinner as soon as possible for sixty persons.' 'Pray, where are they?' said she. 'Coming down, madam,' I replied, 'in that array of carriages on yonder hill.' 'Oh, Oh!' she exclaimed, 'we have nothing to entertain such a company.' 'O yes,' said her little daughter standing at her side, 'father killed the fatted calf this morning.' 'Let us have that roasting forthwith; and what else have you, my good lady?' 'Nothing,' said she. 'Why, yes, mother,' said the daughter, 'father brought home four hams for the dancing-party to-morrow evening.' 'Let them, my kind madam, be boiling at once,' said I. 'And what else have you, my good woman?' 'Nothing,' said she. 'Why, yes, mother,' said the daughter, 'you forget that we made twenty-two pies for the dance to-morrow.' 'That

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will do,' said I, 'my good lady. Now prepare our dinner as soon as possible.'

"I happened to have in the case of our travelling carriage, what I should not presume to have at the present day, several bottles of old Madeira and claret wine. In less than two hours, I had the satisfaction to witness these sixty guests seated at the well-furnished table; and I never saw a more harmonious and social company, who seemed to be at peace with all the world, and all the world at peace with them.

"In the midst of this hilarity I arose, and expressed my grateful acknowledgments for their courtesy and kindness in having thus far accompanied us on the journey of life, and bade one and all an affectionate farewell; we continuing our journey towards Pittsfield, they with conflicting emotions returning to their respective homes."

In 1860 Mr. and Mrs. Wilder, at the urgent request of the lifelong friend who first introduced them to each other, revisited Northampton for the last time. The following item appeared with regard to this in the local paper:

"A Lesson. Forty-six years ago a gentleman left this town with his newly married bride, accompanied by a wedding party of sixty persons. Now returning here, he naturally looks about to see who of them are left. Alas, he meets none but strangers: four only of the wedding party yet remain; the rest he finds in the cemetery. Such is life; mutability is written upon all things. 'Behold, we all do fade as a leaf.'"

About the time of his marriage, Mr. Wilder purchased an estate on the western slope of the Bolton hills in Massachusetts, and overlooking his native town, Lancaster. He had decided not to buy his father's old place, because his mother said she had seen so much trouble in that house she could never

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go there. In his new home Mr. Wilder was able to remain about a year. There are some living who still remember the extreme care taken by him of his wife and mother through that cold New England winter.

Here in this country home Mr. Wilder enjoyed all the pleasures, and vexations too, of a gentleman farmer's life. It was then the time of the famous speculations in merino sheep, which, like others in later years, quite swept over the land. The idea of a shepherd's life with his young bride touched his vein of romance; but he soon felt he had had sufficient experience in the fleecy line, and was doubtless the more ready to fulfil engagements long before made to return to Europe, when, on account of probable speedy peace with England, business could be resumed. Fresh inducements were also laid before him to go as soon as possible, which it was much to his interest to accept; and a sense of duty led him to do so, even though the still unsettled state of political affairs obliged him to go alone.

Not being able to pass direct from our ports to those of England, where business led him first, Mr. Wilder went via Portugal. In England he found it was very difficult to obtain a pass into France. None but those supposed to be English could leave the country. And here occurred an amusing scene. Riding in a stage-coach on the way to Holland, hoping in some way to get across the channel, one of the fine, burly-looking passengers took occasion to remark, speaking of the new regulation about

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passports, "Why, how perfectly ridiculous; one can tell an Englishman anywhere. There is no mistaking any one of us here." "Certainly not," said Mr. Wilder. Arrived at the custom-house, the officer in a gruff voice said to each, "British-born subject, sir?" "Yes," said Mr. Wilder among the rest. "How perfectly ridiculous," said his fellow-traveller, "to put such a question to either of us. Any one could tell where we belong." Mr. Wilder's fine florid appearance certainly did make the Englishman's assurance quite excusable; and he was in truth a British-born subject, as in 1780 this country was not otherwise recognized than as a colony of Great Britain.

In 1817 Mr. Wilder took his family to France, consisting of his wife, infant daughter, and mother-in-law. We give an extract from a letter written by him to the latter in view of her thus going to Paris. After expressing his satisfaction at her decision to do so, he goes on to say to her, whom he addresses as his "honored mother,"

"In assuring you, madam, that it is and ever will be my endeavor to render your situation, during your abode with us, as pleasant and agreeable as my circumstances will admit, I consider it necessary to state to you that my object in visiting Europe is *business*—to gain, not to expend more money than, with economy, is necessary to render our situation comfortable, and at the same time respectable.

"With the blessing of a benign Providence on

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my present commercial arrangements and future exertions, seconded by you, madam, and my Electa, my prospects are fair of ere long acquiring, with the continued aid of that ever-blessed Being to whom I am already so largely indebted, and to whose superintending providence I still confide myself and all my concerns, a sufficiency to enable me to accomplish the first object of my soul—that of being made the humble instrument of contributing largely to disseminate the glorious gospel of our Saviour among the benighted nations of the world, and to convey the glad tidings of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ to those who now 'sit in the region of the shadow of death,' and also to alleviate the wants of those whose claims are sanctioned by the ties of nature, friendship, or charity.

"With filial respect, madam, I remain your ever dutiful son,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

Thus in an indirect manner, in a letter rescued from the privacy of domestic life, we learn that to promote the dear Redeemer's cause had now distinctly become Mr. Wilder's ruling motive in attending to his mercantile affairs.

And thus too, we see, became established in Paris the true Christian home, which, at No. 18 Petit Carreau, for six or seven years became a centre of Protestant religious influence, and almost a place of exchange for all respectable Americans.

In Paris three daughters were added to Mr.

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Wilder's family. The elder one of these died in early infancy, and her mortal remains lie near those of friends from her fatherland, beneath the shadows of Père la Chaise. The younger, closing her beautiful eyes, reached the final haven of rest three days before her stricken parents landed in New York, upon their final return to America in 1823. Mr. Wilder would never suffer any one to speak of these babes, nor of two others subsequently removed, as *lost*. No; the number of his children to him was still complete—so many on earth; so many in heaven.

Thus mingled to Mr. Wilder, as to others, was the cup of life with blessing and with sorrow. We see at one time the Parisian home shrouded with grief because one little "child was not;" and again the joy of being finally homeward bound drowned in tears just as the shores of that home began to loom upon the horizon.

Thus mingled also is the cup God gives us as a nation. In the very midst of public rejoicings and heartfelt thanks at the crumbling of the boasted bulwarks of rebellion, comes the stunning sharp report of that pistol-shot, heard all over the land, above all party strife or private interest. Hark the low wailing cry surging up from the very hearts of the people—Lincoln is laid low. Nay, rather, raised now above all fear of fall, his name enshrined for ever by the side of that of Washington. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." Psa. 39 : 9. "Surely the wrath of man shall

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praise thee." Psa. 76:10. "And let all the people say, Amen." Psa. 106:48.

Do such events excite no interest in heaven? Believe it ye who can; but surely as there is a place where those who on earth belonged to Jesus are now with him in glory, so surely, we believe, have many of them rejoiced anew at hearing the welcome plaudit given in that blessed abode to the noble leader whose loss we mourn: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. 25:21.

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VIII.

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord. Rom. 12:11.

In the above letter from Mr. Wilder to his honored mother-in-law are shown the sentiments which, after his heart was turned unto the Lord, inspired him in the prosecution of his worldly business. The whole-souled consecration of himself and all that was his to his divine Master seems to have been graciously accepted. In the very offering itself Mr. Wilder received a blessing, and his efforts in mercantile life were much prospered.

He early became associated in business with the well-known banking-house of Hottinguer & Co., the senior partner of which, Baron Hottinguer, he was often said to resemble in appearance. Mr. Wilder retained his connection in some form with this house as long as he remained in business; and both Baron Hottinguer, and the son so worthy of him, Henri Hottinguer, proved themselves to be true, life-long friends upon whom he could depend in time of trouble.

In 1812, Mr. Wilder associated himself in the French trade in New York with the late Najah Taylor, Gustavus Upson, and Nathaniel Richards, under the name of Richards, Taylor, & Wilder. This firm dissolved partnership in 1823, when Mr.

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Wilder thought he had finally retired from business.

During his residence abroad, the trade in silks, crapes, etc., came to be very much under Mr. Wilder's control. It is interesting to notice this, because it gave him such influence over hundreds of workmen and their families, who were dependent for employ upon his orders, and so, as was natural, were the more ready to receive with respect the Bibles, tracts, and good words of advice with which, after a time, it was his constant endeavor to supply them. We who, standing behind the scenes as it were, can see through Bible optics why Joseph was raised to power, can perhaps understand without difficulty why it was the Lord's will to place Mr. Wilder in the position he occupied in France.

Mr. Wilder's time was often much taken up with other than his own affairs. Letters of introduction from friends at home were constantly pouring in upon him, rendering some kind of attention necessary upon each new arrival; for these letters had not then become, as now, almost matters of form, to be answered by a card, or merely giving one a formal entrée to the recipient's house upon some state occasion. The case in Mr. Wilder's day was vastly different. Boys were to be placed at school, their morals watched over and examined into; medical students to be put in the right way to walk the hospitals; physicians to be provided, and suitable lodgings for invalids; travellers were to be directed on their way and informed as to the best hotels all

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over Europe; and many asked for just a line to any friends Mr. Wilder might have in various cities they were about to visit. None but those similarly situated can tell how onerous are such requests when coming thick and fast from a succession of applicants. Yet Mr. Wilder did all he could, feeling often that, while aiding those particularly who loved his Master, he himself received a rich reward.

With commissions too for the purchase of articles then not to be obtained in America, Mr. Wilder was constantly favored. It is curious and amusing to review some of the letters containing them. Rev. Dr. Buckminster writes for foreign magazines for the Boston Athenæum; Mr. S. Salisbury for a large number of books for Prof. Stuart at Andover; ladies send for lace shawls and bridal veils; a Roman-catholic bishop in this country asks that his friends in and about Paris may be visited and assured of his welfare; the American ambassador in Sweden that his fame may be vindicated, it having been said that he had abused official station to promote private interest. Boston children send a French guinea to procure French toys, offering a commission on the purchase, and Boston lawyers send for law-books. In one letter alone are actually found orders in detail for paper-hangings, a clock, several paintings—size specified—fine engravings, wine, looking-glasses, porcelain, Michaux's Trees of America, then just out; a book on Napoleon's campaigns; also a Ramboutel buck, and some Fontainebleau grapevines.

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In the prosecution of his business it was sometimes necessary for Mr. Wilder to visit England, Holland, and other countries. Events connected with a few days spent by him in England, in 1816, had a decided influence upon his whole future course in life, introducing him more fully into the world of benevolence, acting by means of the various societies which, as Mr. Wilder would say, "both characterize and adorn the present age." He writes,

"In order to delineate the unknown ways in which a benign Providence makes use of the most feeble instruments for the accomplishment of his great and wise designs, I will here state that, during my stay in London at the Bedford Coffee-house, I had engaged to meet a gentleman one evening near St. Paul's at Ludgate Hill, with a view of being introduced to another gentleman at the 'London Coffee-house.'

"While awaiting his arrival, and walking up and down the Strand, I discovered a church lighted up; and the gentleman not making his appearance according to agreement, and it still being in the early part of the evening, it pleased Providence to direct my steps into said church. It proved to be a Dissenting chapel. The congregation were assembled, as I learned from the sexton, to hear a number of addresses from the Dissenting ministers then present on the occasion of two missionaries, under the sanction of the London Missionary Society, being about to depart for the West Indies,

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with a view to proclaim salvation, through the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer, to the benighted inhabitants of those islands.

"I soon learned that among the prominent ministers who were officiating on this interesting occasion, were the endeared names of Rev. Dr. Burder, Dr. Winter, the two brothers Clayton, and others, and that the distinguished Mr. Hardcastle, 'whose praise was in all the churches,' occupied the chair.

"Residing, as I had been for many years, in that modern Babylon, Paris, and in consequence of the non-intercourse with England during the reign of Napoleon I., I at this time had never as much as heard of a missionary society, or, in fact, of any of the leading religious societies which are the glory and ornament of this nineteenth century. It was therefore the first time that I had ever listened to those pathetic appeals in behalf of a perishing world.

"Having taken, on entering the church, a humble seat near the door, at some distance from the audience, I did not, it seems, attract the attention of the deacons in passing round the contribution-boxes.

"Some of the addresses which fell from the lips of the speakers having made a deep impression on my mind, and my heart becoming penetrated with the importance of the subject submitted to our consideration, I could not resist the desire to contribute my humble mite to this sacred object. I therefore made my way to the foot of the platform and

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deposited my offering, [a £10 note.] The treasurer perceiving that it was a larger sum than was usually contributed at that period, made known the circumstance to Mr. Hardcastle, who soon after rose from his seat and came round to the pew in which I was seated, saying that the demonstration which I had given of interest in the missionary cause induced him to ask the favor of my name and invite my attendance at a meeting at his house the following evening, when special directions would be given to the two missionaries about to embark for the West Indies.

"Thus coming in contact with the pioneers of *missionary efforts*, to which I had heretofore been a stranger, my curiosity was excited to learn something more of the proceedings of these men of God. I therefore the more readily accepted his courteous invitation.

"On the following evening, in conformity with this engagement, I proceeded to the mansion of Mr. Hardcastle, near the London Monument, where, to my inexpressible surprise, I found some fifty or sixty clergymen and laymen assembled, the most active and evangelical of the Dissenters of London. Being formally introduced to the two missionaries and to the most distinguished of the clergy and laity as taking a *lively interest* in the objects for which they were convened, a seat was assigned me near the presiding chair. I took the seat with reluctance. I ought here to state, that at that moment I felt no other interest but that excited by the

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novelty of the scene, though in the course of the evening the instructions given to the missionaries, and the powerful appeals made in behalf of the object, caused a thrill of sacred emotion to penetrate the inmost recesses of my heart; leaving so indelible an impression of the importance of the missionary cause and kindred enterprises, that neither time, distance, nor circumstance has effaced that eventful hour from the tablets of memory.

"Among the gentlemen present on this memorable occasion, was Mr. Collins of the London Religious Tract Society, to whom I was particularly introduced. In the course of conversation he asked me if there was any demand for French tracts in Paris, or if any quantity could be disposed of there. Not being certain whether he referred to *tracts of land*, or otherwise, I was quite at a loss what reply to make to this inquiry, when he happily relieved my embarrassment by drawing from his side-pocket two or three unpretending pamphlets, on which I saw inscribed, 'London Religious Tract Society.'

"After casting my eye over several pages, and believing that the French people might be benefited by their perusal, I took from my pocket-book a bank-note of ten pounds, requesting Mr. Collins to furnish me to that amount with French tracts, embracing a due proportion of all the numbers which had at that time issued from their press.

"I was struck with surprise the next day, to see a large bale of tracts brought to my lodgings, having previously had no idea of the low price of them,

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nor consequently of what a quantity a ten-pound note would purchase. However, I took them over with me to Calais, where they were all at once *seized at the custom-house*, with the understanding, however, that I could claim the package upon my arrival in Paris, after it had been examined there by the prefect of police.

"Arrived in Paris, I proceeded to the very building in which Marie Antoinette and Josephine had been incarcerated, where I saw my bale, and asked for it.

"'Who is the presumptuous man who dares to say he owns these suspected books?' exclaimed a pompous official. 'Follow me, sir.' I obeyed, and found myself in a large room full of persons occupied with their own various concerns.

"'Here he is; here is the owner of that bale of books,' called out the man I was following in a voice so loud as to attract the attention of all.

"'Allow me, sir,' said I to the chief officer standing within the railing, 'to have the bale brought in here and opened, that I may present you, sir, with a copy of each of the publications it contains.'

"'That is but fair,' said the officer.

"After making a selection of the books, I said, speaking aloud, 'These books contain only the truths taught us in the Bible; some of them in the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ. I give them to you gladly. Let me read a short one to you.'

"'Sir,' said he when I had finished, 'I see nothing but good in this book. I thank you for these

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you have given me.' Others standing about the railing asked for a few to take home with them, saying, 'These teach good morals.'

"Suffice it to say, I distributed on the spot from three hundred to four hundred tracts. The remainder I was allowed to take home. The workmen in my employ received them with great eagerness. In less than a month my whole supply was exhausted.

"I wrote to London to order more, sending to Mr. Samuel Williams another ten-pound note for the purpose; but I heard nothing from him. A friend, Dr. Gallaudet, then recently from Paris, meeting him at dinner, mentioned that I had never received some tracts I expected, when Mr. Williams said, 'What is Wilder about in Paris, ordering such books?' However, he now attended to my commission.

"There was such a strong prejudice in France against any thing English, that I found there would be decided advantage in having tracts printed in Paris. Mr. Hillhouse, from New Haven, being in that city at this time, I engaged him to translate some English tracts into French, and for two years went on with the printing and distribution of them with great success."

In this quiet, informal way was the work commenced which was afterwards adopted and continued by the Paris Tract Society, formed under Mr. Wilder's roof in 1818.

By Mr. Wilder's own account, above given, we see how, almost unconsciously to himself, he was

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prepared for the work he was to do in France; how, after this, a new interest attached itself to his intercourse with those he employed, and indeed with any human being brought under his influence.

This led him, in his various journeys through France and elsewhere, to add the new feature of tract and Bible distribution to his previous general desire to benefit those about him, and is the key to his well-known efforts in connection with "THE VILLAGE IN THE MOUNTAINS"—a village now truly "set on a hill, that cannot be hid." The substance of this history, as drawn substantially from his own lips, and published by the American Tract Society, is here given.

Mr. W——, a merchant at the head of one of the first commercial houses in Paris, had occasion to visit the manufactories established in the mountainous tracts of the departments of the Loire and the Puy-de-Dôme. The road that conducted him back to Lyons traversed a country rich in natural productions, and glowing with all the charms of an advanced and promising spring. The nearer view was unusually diversified, not only by the fantastic forms of mountains, the uncertain course of small and tributary streams, and the varying hues of fields of pasture, corn, vines, and vegetables, but by the combinations and contrasts of nature and of art, and the occupations of rural and commercial industry. Factories and furnaces were seen rising amid barns and sheep-cotes; peasants were dig-

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ging and ploughs gliding amid forges and foundries; verdant slopes and graceful clumps of trees were scattered amid the black and ugly mouths of exhausted coal-pits; and the gentle murmur of the stream was subdued by the loud rattle of the loom. Sometimes Mr. W—— and his friends halted amid all that is delightful and soothing; and, after a short advance, found themselves amid barrenness, deformity, and confusion. The remoter scenery was not less impressive. Behind them were the rugged mountains of Puy-de-Dôme; the lofty Tarare lifted its majestic head beside them, and far before appeared the brilliant summit of Mont Blanc.

In this state of mind he arrived at the outskirts of a hamlet placed on the declivity of a mountain; and being desirous of finding a shorter and more retired track, he stopped at a decent-looking dwelling-house to inquire the way. From the windows several females were watching the movements of a little child; and just as Mr. W—— inquired for a road across the mountains, the infant was in danger of being crushed by a coal-cart which had entered the street. The cries and alarms of the females were met by the activity of the travellers, and the companion of Mr. W—— set off to snatch the infant from danger, and place him in security. An elderly female, from the second story, gave Mr. W——, who was still on his horse, the directions he desired, and at the same time expressed her uneasiness that the gentleman should have had the trouble to seek the child.

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"Madam," interrupted Mr. W——, "my friend is only performing his duty: we ought to do to another as we would that another should do to us; and in this wretched world we are bound to assist each other. You are kind enough to direct us travellers in the right road, and surely the least we can do is to rescue your child from danger. The holy Scriptures teach us these duties, and the gospel presents us the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were in ignorance and danger, came to our world to seek and to save that which was lost."

"Ah, sir," replied the good woman, "you are very condescending, and what you say is very true; but your language surprises me: it is so many years since in this village we have heard such truths, and especially from the lips of a stranger."

"Madam," resumed Mr. W——, "we are all strangers here, and sojourners bound to eternity; there is but one road, one guide, one Saviour, who can conduct us safely: if we feel this, young or old, rich or poor, we are all one in Christ; and, however scattered on earth, shall all arrive at the heavenly city, to which he has gone to prepare mansions for us."

"These doctrines, sir," exclaimed the female, "support the hearts of many of us who have scarcely travelled beyond our own neighborhood; and it is so rare and so delightful to hear them from others, that, if it will not be an abuse of your Christian politeness, I would request you to alight, and visit my humble apartments."

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"I shall comply most cheerfully with your request," replied Mr. W——; "for, though time is precious, I shall be thankful to spend a few minutes in these mountains among those with whom I hope to dwell for ever on Mount Sion."

Mr. W—— mounted to the second story, followed by his companion. He found the female with whom he had conversed surrounded by her daughters and granddaughters, all busily employed in five looms, filled with galloons and ribbons destined for the capital and the most distant cities of the world. The good widow was between sixty and seventy years of age; her appearance was neat, and all the arrangements of her apartment bespoke industry, frugality, and piety. "Ah, sir," she exclaimed as he entered, "how happy am I to receive such a visitor!"

"Madam," replied Mr. W——, "I am not worthy to enter under this roof."

"Why, sir," exclaimed the widow, "you talked to us of Jesus Christ, and —"

"Yes, madam, but I am a poor guilty sinner, and hope only for salvation through the cross. I was yesterday at St. ——, where they were planting a cross with great ceremony; were you there?"

"No, sir; for it is of little use to erect crosses in the streets, if we do not carry the cross in our hearts, and are not crucified to the world. But, sir, if you will not be offended, may I ask what you are called?"

Mr. W——, giving a general sense to the French

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phraseology, answered, "My name, madam, is ——."

"Thank you, sir, I shall not forget; but this is not what I meant: I wished to know whether you are Protestant or Catholic—a pastor or a priest?"

"Madam, I have not the honor to be either; I am a merchant: I desire to be a Christian, and to have no other title but a disciple of Christ."

"That is exactly as we are here, sir," exclaimed the good widow, and added, "but, as you are so frank, are you, sir, Catholic or Protestant?"

"Catholic," replied Mr. W——. Madam looked confused, and observed that "it was rare for the Catholics to talk as her visitor had done."

"I am a Catholic," resumed Mr. W——, "but not a member of the *Roman*-catholic church. I love all that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity. I do not ask in what fold they feed, so that they are guided and nourished by the good Shepherd and Bishop of souls."

"Oh what a favor the Lord has granted us to meet with a Christian like ourselves," said the tearful widow, looking round her. "We desire to live in charity with all mankind; but, to be frank also, sir, we do not go to mass, nor to confession, for we do not learn from our Testament, which is indeed almost worn out, that we are required to confess to sinners like ourselves, nor to worship the host, nor to perform penance for the salvation of our souls; and we believe we can serve God acceptably in a cave, or in a chamber, or on a mountain."

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"I confess, madam, in my turn," said Mr. W——, "that I am exceedingly astonished to find such persons on such a spot; pray, how many may there be of your sentiments?"

"Here, sir, and scattered over the mountains, there are from three to four hundred. We meet on Sabbath evenings, and as often as we can, to pray to Jesus, to read the Testament, and to converse about the salvation of our souls. We are so much persecuted by the clergy, that we cannot appear as publicly as we wish. We are called *beguines** and fools; but I can bear this, and I hope a great deal more, for Him who has suffered so much for us."

While the conversation of which this is a sketch was passing, the rooms had filled, the neighbors had been informed and introduced, at the request of the worthy hostess, and as many as could quit their occupations pressed to hear of the things of the kingdom of God. Mr. W—— desired to see the New Testament. It was presented. The title-page was gone, the leaves were almost worn to shreds by the fingers of the weavers and laborers, and he could not discover the edition. A female of respectable appearance approached him and said,

"Sir, for several years I have sought everywhere a New Testament, and I have offered any price for one in all the neighboring villages, but in vain. Could you, sir, possibly procure me a copy? I will gladly pay you any sum you demand —"

* Religious enthusiasts.

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"Madam, I will not only procure you *one*," replied Mr. W—— eagerly, "but in forty-eight hours I will send you half a dozen."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the astonished villagers. "May we, sir, believe the good news? May we rely on your promise? It appears too great—too good. We will pay for them now, sir, if you please."

"You may depend on receiving them," said Mr. W——, "if God prolongs my life. But I entreat you to do me the favor to accept them as a proof of my Christian regard, and an expression of my gratitude for having been permitted to enjoy, in this unpromising spot, the refreshing company of the followers of Christ."

The conversation then turned on the value of the sacred volume, and the sinfulness of those who withhold it from perishing and dejected sinners. After some time the hostess inquired, "Pray, sir, can you tell us if any thing extraordinary is passing in the world? We are shut out from all intercourse; but we have an impression that God is commencing a great work in the earth, and that wonderful events are coming to pass."

"Great events have taken place, and news is arriving every day," said Mr. W——, "from all parts of the world, of the progress of the gospel and the fulfilment of the holy Scriptures." He then gave to his attentive and enraptured auditory an outline of the moral changes accomplished by the diffusion of the Bible, the labors of missiona-

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ries, and the establishment of schools; but only such an outline as was suited to their general ignorance of the state of what is called the religious world. And when he had concluded, they all joined in the prayer, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." Anxious as was Mr. W—— to pursue his journey, he devoted three hours to this interview. He exhorted them to receive and practise only what they found in the Scriptures, and to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart.

The termination of this extraordinary meeting was most affecting: tears of pleasure, gratitude, and regret streamed from the eyes of the mountaineers; and the traveller, though more deeply moved by having seen the grace of God than by all the scenes through which he had passed, went on his way rejoicing, and following the directions of the good widow, he arrived at the town of S——. In this town he had correspondents among the principal inhabitants and authorities, and under the impression of all he had witnessed, he inquired, as if with the curiosity of a traveller, the name of the hamlet he had passed on the mountains, and the nature of the employments and the character of its inhabitants.

"The men," said the mayor, "work in the mines, drive the teams, and labor in the fields, and the women and children weave. They are a very curious people, *outrés illuminés*, new lights, but the most honest work-people in the country—probity

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itself. We have no occasion to weigh our silk, either when we give it out or take it in, for we are sure not to lose the value of a farthing: and the kindest creatures in the world; they will take their clothes off their backs to give to any one in distress: indeed there is no wretchedness among them; for, though poor, they are industrious, temperate, charitable, and always assist each other; but touch them on their religion, and they are almost idiots. They never go to mass nor confession; in fact, they are not Christians, though the most worthy people in the world—and so droll: imagine those poor people, after working all the week, instead of enjoying the Sunday, and going to a fête or a ball to amuse themselves, meeting in each other's houses, and sometimes in the mountains, to read some book, and pray, and sing hymns. They are very clever work-people, but they pass their Sundays and holidays stupidly enough."

This testimony, so honorable to his new acquaintance, was confirmed to Mr. W—— from several quarters; and he learned from others, what he had not been told by themselves, that, besides their honesty and charity, so great is their zeal, that they flock from the different hamlets, and meet in the mountains, in cold and bad weather, at eight or nine o'clock at night, to avoid the interruption of their enemies, and to sing and pray.

These accounts were not calculated to lessen the interest excited in the breast of Mr. W——, and immediately on his arrival at Lyons, he despatched

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six copies of the New Testament, and some copies of the tract entitled "*Les Deux Vieillards*," The Two Old Men. Some time after his return to Paris, Mr. W—— received, through one of his correspondents at Lyons, a letter from the excellent widow with whom he had conversed. Of this letter a literal translation is subjoined; the modesty, dignity, and piety of which not only evince the influence of true religion, but will satisfy the reader that, in this narration, no exaggerated statement has been made of the character of these mountaineers.

"Sir—I have the honor to write you, to assure you of my very humble respects, and at the same time to acknowledge the reception of the six copies of the New Testament which you had the goodness and the generosity to send us. My family, myself, and my neighbors know not how adequately to express our sincere gratitude; for we have nothing in the world so precious as that sacred volume, which is the best food of our souls, and our certain guide to the heavenly Jerusalem.

"As we believe and are assured that the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ could alone have inspired you with the desire to distribute the sacred Scriptures to those who are disposed to make a holy use of them, we hope and believe that the divine Saviour will be himself your recompense; and that he will give to you, as well as to all of us, the grace to understand and to seek a part in his second coming; for this ought to be our only and constant desire in the times of darkness and tribulation in which we live.

"It is with this view, sir, that I entreat you to have the goodness to send six more copies of the sacred volume for several of my friends, who are delighted, not only with the beauty of the type, but especially with the purity of the edition; for it is sufficient to see the name of Monsieur le Maitre de Sacy, to be assured that this edition is strictly con-

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formable to the sacred text. Sir, as the persons who have charged me to entreat you to send six more copies of the New Testament would be sorry to abuse your generosity, they also charge me to say, that if you accomplish their wishes, as your truly Christian kindness induces them to hope, and will mark the price on the books, they shall feel it to be a pleasure and duty to remit you the amount when I acknowledge the arrival of the parcel. Could you also add six copies of the little tract, entitled '*Les Deux Vieillards*?'

"I entreat you, sir, to excuse the liberty I have taken, and to believe that while life remains, I am, in the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, your very humble servant,

"THE WIDOW ——."

The reception of this letter revived in Mr. W—— that lively interest which he had been constrained to feel for the prosperity of these happy villagers. Often had he called to mind the Christian kindness with which they received him, and often had he presented his ardent prayer to the God of grace, that he who "had begun a good work in them" would carry it on to "the day of Jesus Christ."

Instead of complying with the request of this venerable woman to send her six copies of the New Testament, he sent her twenty, authorizing her to sell them to such as were able to pay; but to present them, at her own discretion, to those who were desirous of obtaining them, and had not the means to purchase, "without money and without price." With these he also presented to the widow, as a mark of his Christian affection, a Bible for her own use, together with a dozen copies of the tract which she had requested, and several other religious books.

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This unexpected bounty the widow acknowledged in a beautiful letter, breathing the same spirit as that above given, the reception of which produced an effect on the mind of Mr. W——, as well as on the minds of many of his Christian friends at Paris, of the happiest kind. He informed the widow of the great satisfaction with which he had learned the eagerness of the villagers to obtain the word of God, and that he had directed his friend, the publisher of the New Testament of De Sacy, to send her fifty copies more; at the same time promising her a fresh supply, if they should be needed. He also expressed to her the hope that, as he expected his business would, within a few months, call him again to S——, he should be able, Providence permitting, to avail himself of that opportunity, and enjoy the happiness of another visit at her residence.

In another letter Mr. W—— was informed that the second supply of Bibles and Testaments had all been disposed of within *two days* from the time of their arrival, and that many who earnestly desired a copy were yet unsupplied—the distribution having only created an increased demand. Mr. W—— resolved not to neglect their wants, as long as it was in his power to supply them; and the day being not far distant when he proposed to repair to S——, and to make a second visit to the village in the mountains, he prepared a case of a hundred New Testaments and a hundred octavo Bibles, which he forwarded to Lyons by the *roulage acceleré*,

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or baggage wagon, to meet his arrival there; and soon after took his departure from Paris.

There were some interesting incidents in the progress of this tour, which so delightfully point to the hand of God, that the reader may be gratified in becoming acquainted with them. On his arrival at Lyons, Mr. W——, finding no other way of transportation except the common *diligence*, a public stage-coach, was obliged to resort to this conveyance. The case of Bibles and Testaments which he had forwarded was so large, that the only method by which it could be carried was to set it up on end in the basket attached to the back of the diligence; and such was the weight and size of the box, that it was with no small difficulty, and by the assistance of several men, that it was safely adjusted. At first the passengers objected to taking their seats with such a weight behind, lest they should meet with some accident, or be impeded in their progress. After much persuasion, however, and after presenting a number of religious tracts to each passenger, and requesting the conductor to drive slow, they were prevailed on to proceed on their journey. The course they were pursuing led through a part of the country solely inhabited by *Roman-catholics*, where, the year before, Mr. W—— had distributed a number of Bibles and tracts, the reading of which, he had subsequently ascertained, had been forbidden by the priests, who had not only demanded them, but consigned most or all of them to the flames. Mr. W—— thought necessary, in this journey, to

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suspend his distributions in this immediate vicinity. But the providence of God had other views, and so ordered it that, without the instrumentality of men, the sacred records should be scattered among that people. On reaching the place of his destination at the foot of the mountains, and alighting from the diligence, Mr. W—— discovered that the case had opened at the top, and that not a few Bibles and Testaments had been scattered along the way. Travellers were soon seen coming up, some in wagons and some on horseback, some with a Bible and some with a New Testament under their arm. They informed him that for eight or ten miles back, the inhabitants had been supplied by the diligence, as the books had fallen out whenever they descended a hill, or travelled over rocky and uneven ground.

While taking the case from the diligence several more persons came up, each bringing his Bible or Testament, which they most readily offered to return to Mr. W——, but which he as cheerfully requested them to accept, observing to them that they had been destined for their perusal by that Providence whose unseen hand directs all human events. Though ignorant of the contents of the volume which God had thus given them, they expressed many thanks to Mr. W—— for his generosity, and were about to proceed on their way, apparently rejoicing, when he dismissed them by saying, "My friends, I feel peculiarly happy in thus being the instrument of putting into your hands

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that volume which contains the records of eternal life, and which points you to 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' If you faithfully read it, and imbibe its glorious and precious truths, and obey its precepts, it will render you happy in this life, and happy during the endless ages of eternity."

Having opened the case, he found that forty-nine Bibles and Testaments had been thus distributed. Some of his fellow-passengers were ready to believe that the box had been intentionally left open, but Mr. W—— assured them that it had been carefully secured in the usual manner, and that not until his arrival at the spot where they alighted, had he known that any had fallen out.

Having made arrangements to have the case forwarded to the widow, and having addressed to her a note informing her of his intention to proceed to the large village of S——, where he proposed tarrying a few days, during which time he hoped once more to visit her and her friends, Mr. W—— resumed his seat in the diligence, and arrived at S—— the same night. On the next day but one after his arrival, he was agreeably surprised at an early hour in the morning, to find the hotel where he lodged surrounded by fifty or sixty persons, inquiring for the gentleman who had a day or two before presented to a number of their citizens THE BOOK which, as they said, "contained a true history of the birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

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Others of them called it by its proper name, the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All of them were anxious to purchase a copy of it. As soon as Mr. W—— ascertained the object of their visit, he appeared on the balcony and expressed his regret that he had no more of those interesting volumes with him, informing them that if it pleased God he should return to Paris, he would forward a hundred to his correspondent in that place, that each of them might be furnished with a copy. This was accordingly done immediately after his return to Paris. And during his residence there Mr. W—— had the satisfaction to see that more or less individuals from S——, who came to solicit orders for their manufacturing establishments, also brought orders for an additional supply of the sacred volume. And the number of Bibles and Testaments which were introduced into a dense Catholic population, in consequence of the apparently trivial circumstance of the opening of the case in the diligence, will probably never be ascertained until the great day of account; nor will it be known to what extent they have been instrumental in reclaiming and saving the souls of deluded men.

On the day following, Mr. W—— received a deputation from the village in the mountains, anxiously desiring to hear on what day and hour they might hope to enjoy his long-expected visit. He proposed to be at the widow's house the following morning, at 11 o'clock. Furnished with a carriage

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and horses by one of his friends, he set out accordingly; and, on reaching the foot of the mountain, was met by a deputation of twelve or fifteen of these faithful followers of the Lamb, who greeted his approach with demonstrations of joy. He immediately descended from the carriage, and was conducted to the house of the widow with every expression of the most sincere Christian affection, some taking him by the sleeve, and others by the skirts of his coat, some preceding and others following him. But what was his surprise, on arriving at the house, to find an assembly of from sixty to eighty, who, with one voice, desired him to *preach* to them! Mr. W—— observed to them, that he was an unworthy layman, and totally unqualified for such a responsible duty, and the more so at that time, as his mind had been occupied in his secular business; and he felt the need of himself receiving instruction, instead of attempting to impart it to others. But a chair had been placed for him in a suitable part of the room, and a small table covered with a green cloth placed before it, on which was laid the copy of the Bible which he had some months before presented to the widow. Mr. W—— saw he could not avoid saying something to this importunate company, and looking to God for assistance and a blessing, took the chair which had been set for him, and resolved to attempt to draw from the Bible, for their benefit, such instruction and consolation as he might be enabled to impart.

To the eye of Mr. W—— every thing gave beauty

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and solemnity to this unexpected scene. The room into which he was conducted was filled with the villagers, all conveniently accommodated on benches. A large door opened in the rear of the house, and discovered the declivity of the mountain on which it stood, skirted also with listening auditors. While at a distance the flocks and herds were peacefully feeding, the trees covered with beautiful foliage were waving in the breeze, and all nature seemed to be in harmony with those sacred emotions which so obviously pervaded this rural assembly.

After addressing the throne of grace, Mr. W—— read a part of the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. He turned their attention more especially to that interesting passage in the twelfth verse: "*There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*" He endeavored to point out to them the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the awful consequences of violating the law of God, the inefficacy of all those expedients which the ignorance, the pride, or the self-righteousness of men had substituted for the "only name" Christ Jesus. He spoke of the necessity of this great sacrifice on the cross, of the love of God in sending his Son into the world, of the fulness and all-sufficiency of the mighty redemption, and of the duty of sinners to accept it and live. "It is through Christ alone," said he, "that you can have hope of pardon and salvation. You must take up the cross and follow Christ. You must renounce your sins and flee to Christ. You must renounce your own righteous-

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ness, and trust alone in Christ. You must renounce all other lords, and submit to Christ. If you had offended an earthly monarch, to whom you could have access only through his son, would you address yourselves to his *servants* rather than his *son?* And will you then, in the great concerns of your souls, go to any other than the *Son?* Will you have recourse to the *Virgin Mary*, or some favored *servant*, rather than address yourselves to Him who is 'the way, and the truth, and the life?' and when God himself assures us that '*there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved?*'"

Having thus proceeded for the space of fifteen or twenty minutes, and at a moment when the greater part of his audience were in tears, the widow suddenly came running to Mr. W——, saying, with great agitation, "*Monsieur! Monsieur!*"

"What, madam, what?" said Mr. W——.

"I perceive," said she, "at a distance, the Deputy Mayor of a neighboring village, in company with several women, approaching with a speedy step towards my house. These people are among our greatest persecutors: shall I not call in our little band of brothers and sisters, and fasten the doors?" "No, madam," said Mr. W——; "on the contrary, if it be possible, open the doors still wider: trust in God our Saviour, and leave to me the direction of this matter."

By this time considerable alarm seemed to pervade the whole assembly, and some confusion en-

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sued, in consequence of several leaving their seats. Mr. W—— begged them to be composed, and to resume their seats, saying that the object for which they were assembled was one which God would accept of and approve, which angels would delight in, and at which Satan trembled; and that they had nothing to fear from the arm of flesh. By this time the Mayor made his appearance at the threshold of the door, together with his attendants.

"Come in, sir," said Mr. W——, "and be seated," pointing to a chair near the table.

"No, sir," said he, "I prefer to remain here."

"But I prefer," said Mr. W——, "that you come in, and also your companions, and be seated."

Perceiving Mr. W—— to be firm in his determination, they complied, and were all seated among his nearest auditors.

He then, without any further remarks, having the Bible open before him, directed their attention to those words in Christ's Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. 5:10, 12.

He proceeded to set before them the sufferings of the apostles and primitive Christians for the truth as it is in Jesus, and the constancy and firm-

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ness with which, in all circumstances, they endured these sufferings, on account of the love which they bore to their Saviour; that they had good reason for so doing, for they were assured by Christ, in the words just read, that "great should be their reward in heaven." He then proceeded to show the immense responsibility which those assumed, and the enormity of their guilt, who, ignorantly or designedly, persecute the followers of Christ. That they were but "heaping up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath." That the day was not far distant, when the awful realities of eternity would burst upon their view; and that every man would then be judged "according to the deeds done in the body."

Mr. W—— had proceeded in this manner for ten or twelve minutes, bringing the truth to bear especially upon the minds of his new audience, when he perceived the Mayor wiping his eyes with the cuff of his sleeve, who, rising at that moment from his seat, exclaimed,

"Sir, I acknowledge that I have heretofore felt an enmity towards many of the people whom I here see before me; and have, as far as my influence extended in my official capacity, endeavored to break up what I have considered their illegal assemblies, and to coerce them back within the pale of the mother church, which one after another of them have been abandoning for years past. But if all that you have expressed be true, and is in conformity with the sacred volume of God's word, and if

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the book which you hold in your hand is a correct translation of the original copy, I beg you to sell it me, that I may peruse it myself, and give the reading of it to others better able to judge of its contents; and if I there find the promises and threatenings as stated by you to be correct, you may rely upon it, that, so far from persecuting these in other respects harmless people, I will hereafter be their friend."

On hearing this, Mr. W—— immediately requested the widow to bring several Bibles from the case which he brought with him in the diligence, and which had reached the house according to his direction; one of which he presented to the Mayor, and one to each of his Catholic associates. On the Mayor's offering to pay for the one put into his hand, Mr. W—— observed, that he had much pleasure in presenting it to him, as well as to his companions, in the hope that they would hereafter not only become the friends of this interesting people, but, what was of more importance, the friends of Jesus Christ, who is the "*only* Mediator between God and man." With this they took their departure: Mr. W—— observing to them, that his heart's desire and prayer to God was, that by a careful, humble, and prayerful perusal of that sacred volume, their understandings might become enlightened, and their hearts imbued with the riches of divine grace; that they might thereby be led hereafter to advocate the very cause which they had heretofore been attempting to destroy; and that,

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when they had done serving God their Saviour here below, they might find themselves among that happy number "whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." They left the house, all of them in tears, and, as it appeared, deeply impressed with the truths which had been exhibited.

After he had concluded these remarks, Mr. W—— requested that some of the remaining Bibles and Testaments might be brought and laid before him on the table. These he distributed gratuitously to all present who had not before been supplied, and who were unable to purchase them. While he was doing this, many who had previously received the sacred volume came forward and manifested their gratitude by laying upon the table their various donations of from two to ten francs each, till, in a few moments, the table was well-nigh covered. Mr. Wilder told them he was unwilling to receive money in that manner, and wished them to put their gifts into the hands of the widow, accompanied by the names of the donors, that they might be regularly accounted to the Bible Society. This they consented to do with some reluctance, when the widow brought from her drawer a purse containing a hundred and seventy francs, saying to Mr. Wilder that he could not refuse that money, as it was the proceeds of Bibles and Testaments which she had sold in compliance with his directions. He replied to her that he had indeed requested her to sell these volumes to such as were able to purchase, that he might ascertain whether there were persons

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in that neighborhood who sufficiently appreciated the word of God to be willing to pay for it; but that object having been accomplished, it was now his privilege, on his own personal responsibility, to place the hundred and seventy francs in the hands of the widow, to be distributed in equal portions to the three unfortunate families whom they had mentioned as having recently lost their husbands and fathers by the caving in of a coal-pit.

On hearing this, they together, spontaneously as it were, surrounded Mr. W——, and with tears streaming from their eyes, loaded him with their expressions of gratitude and their blessings, rendering it the most touching scene which he ever witnessed.

Amid all these tokens of their Christian affection, Mr. W—— was compelled to prepare for his departure, and imploring the richest of heaven's mercies upon their heads, bade them an affectionate farewell.

The whole company followed him to the carriage, and just as he had reached it, he once more addressed them, saying, "My dear friends, if any of you have not yet submitted yourselves to God, and are out of the ark of safety, I beseech you, 'give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids,' until you flee to the Saviour. And those of you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, live near to God, bear cheerfully the cross of your Redeemer, follow on to know the Lord and do his will, and by his grace reigning in your hearts, you shall come

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off conquerors, and more than conquerors." When he had said this, and had again commended them to the God of all mercy through a crucified Redeemer, he drove off amid their prayers and blessings, to see them no more till that day when they shall meet in the kingdom of their Father, where sighs and farewells are sounds unknown, and where God shall wipe away all tears from every eye.

After Mr. W——'s return to Paris, he had the pleasure to learn from the widow that all the Bibles he had left with her were disposed of, and that many, in various directions from the village, were earnest to obtain them, but could not be supplied. In the mean time a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of these villagers had diffused itself beyond the limits of Paris, or even of France. The first eight pages of this tract having found its way to England, had been published by the Religious Tract Society of London, and had obtained a very wide circulation. A parish in one of the interior towns of England had forwarded to Mr. W—— twenty pounds sterling, for the purchase of Bibles to be presented to the widow for gratuitous distribution; and a family of Friends from Wales, having read the narrative, visited Mr. W—— at Paris, and proceeded thence to the village in the mountains, where they tarried no less than three weeks, assuring Mr. W——, on their return to Paris, that it had been the most interesting three weeks of their lives.

As the proceeds of the twenty pounds, Mr. W—— forwarded to the widow fifty Bibles and

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fifty Testaments, with a selection of several other choice books and tracts. These Bibles, Testaments, and tracts were all actually disposed of in *eight days*, of which the widow gave early information, accompanied by letters to Mr. W—— and to the benevolent donors in England, expressing, in the most cordial manner, her gratitude and that of those who had thus been supplied with the word of life. She gave a particular statement of the eagerness with which they had been read, of their distribution in many Catholic families, and the conversion of some to the truth as it is in Jesus. She informed that many individuals and families were still unsupplied; and for herself and those around her, expressed her thanksgivings to God for the wonders of his love in inspiring the hearts of his children to unite their efforts in Bible and other benevolent institutions, and to contribute of their substance to extend to the destitute a knowledge of the gospel.

The last letter which Mr. W—— received from the widow before he left the country, contained two hundred francs, which she and her children had contributed as a donation in acknowledgment of the Bibles and Testaments which he had from time to time forwarded.

Mr. W—— replied to her that it gave him more joy than to have received twenty thousand francs from another source, as it testified their attachment to the word of God. He returned her the full amount of their donation in Bibles, with two hundred and fifty Testaments from the Society, to-

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gether with fifty from himself, as his last present before his departure, and also six hundred tracts and several other religious books. Pointing out to her an esteemed friend in Paris, to whom, if further supplies should be needed, she might apply with assurance that her requests would be faithfully regarded, and exhorting her to remain steadfast in the faith, and to fix her eye always upon the Saviour, he commended her to God, in the fervent hope that, through the unsearchable riches of his grace, he should hereafter meet her and her persecuted associates in that world "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Mr. Wilder never lost his interest in this people, these sheep scattered in the wilderness, which he had been the means of more fully establishing in the fold of Christ, though for a long time after his return to America he received but indirect accounts of their welfare and well-doing. The Lord continued to watch over and to bless them. An evangelical Protestant church was formed at St. Etienne, schools were established among the neighboring Roman-catholics, and the good work had gone on beyond the power of a feeble Protestant community to sustain it. Help was much needed, and in 1862 the thoughts and hearts of many who still remembered him, turned to their early friend now in far off America. Through the Rev. Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, their pastor Mr. Rivier learned Mr. Wilder's address in this country. This led to

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a correspondence of deep interest, which gladdened Mr. Wilder's heart during the last three or four years of his life on earth. One of these letters especially filled him with gratitude, telling of the joy with which a letter written by Mr. Wilder to this flock in St. Etienne had been received.

"AUGUST 30, 1862.

"To the Rev. Theophile Rivier, Pastor at St. Etienne, Department of the Loire, near Lyons:

"MY DEAR SIR—I cannot but feel grateful to that superintending Providence, in whom we live and move and have our being, for having protracted my unprofitable life to the present period, thereby affording me the inexpressible satisfaction of receiving at this my summer retreat the thrilling intelligence which your letter of May 19th conveys.

"Forty years have indeed rolled away since I left that interesting country. I disclaim all merit in the providential incident which seems to be implied in your letter, and to God, and God alone, be all the praise, all the honor, and all the glory.

"Believing that every thing coöperates, directly or indirectly, for the accomplishment of the wise designs of that benign Being whose power directs and controls all events; and while I can and do most cordially reciprocate the kind and affectionate sentiments of the estimable granddaughter of that mother in Israel, the late widow Gillier, I can assure you that I feel the same lively interest in the temporal and spiritual welfare of the rising genera-

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tion in those regions, that I did in that of their forefathers in bygone years.

"In view of the establishment of an evangelical church, followed by the wonderful and triumphant display of the power of divine grace in the conviction and conversion of sinners, among a population of one hundred thousand immortal souls, most of whom, it is to be apprehended, have been and still are under the pernicious and soul-destroying influence of those spiritual guides alluded to in the fifteenth chapter of St. Matthew and the fourteenth verse, sensations have been awakened in my breast which have penetrated the inmost recesses of my soul.

"I see however, with sorrow and dismay, that this pious enterprise is laboring under pecuniary embarrassments. . . . . Please to assure this little band, who by the grace of God compose the memberships of your infant evangelical church, that I feel united to *them* by the strongest ties of Christian affection, as well as to the survivors of the dear family of the widow Gillier.

"Impressed as I am with the conviction that with yourself, reverend sir, we are all animated by the same glorious hopes, cheered by the same celestial prospects, relying on the same gracious promises, and looking to the same divine Saviour for salvation, let me, in conclusion, assure one and all, for the last time in this world of mutability, that with our hopes founded on the promises of the gospel, our lives regulated by its unerring precepts, imbib-

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ing more and more of its benign and peaceful spirit, neither shrinking from the cross nor becoming weary in well-doing, we may look forward with a thrill of sacred joy to ere long meeting each other amid the effulgent glories of heaven, where a more than earthly union will be the bond, love the inspiring motive, and praise the everlasting theme.

"In love to the Saviour I salute you, reverend and dear sir, with Christian affection,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

"MR. S. V. S. WILDER, New York:

"Thanks, dear sir, for all the sympathy you testify for us, for all the encouraging words you address us, and for all the petitions you cause to ascend to the throne of grace in our behalf.

"I also thank Dr. Hallock heartily for the lines he added to your letter, and am happy to have been by that means brought into relation with him. I also thank him as well as you for copies of the tract, 'Le Village dans les Montagnes.' It has been distributed to many persons who were not before acquainted with it, for it is not now to be had in France, and I hope it will continue to be blessed from on high to many souls. The whole letter has been translated and read before our assembled church, and produced a deep impression on those who heard it.

"Many persons here still remember you; the granddaughter of the widow Gillier was overjoyed at hearing from you. Some days since I saw a

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woman named Madame Roche, converted to the Lord and received into our church only a few years ago. She said to me eagerly, 'You have received a letter from that American gentleman? How glad I should be to read it. The little child that fell by the roadside in front of the widow Gillier's house, and whom Mr. Wilder's friend picked up, *was I, it was I.* Oh, when you write to this good gentleman, tell him that you have seen me; tell him that my mother was present at his visit to Mrs. Gillier's; that she was led to the knowledge of the Lord by that means, and that she died some time afterwards, entering into rest in the presence of God. Tell him that I also have learned to know my Saviour, and that I am alone in my family. Ask him if he remembers a little boy six months old who was playing on the ground before the house, and to whom he gave a five-franc piece to play with; and when, at his departure, my mother would have returned him the coin, he told her to keep it. That little boy was my brother; he is not converted, but manifests deep interest in the concerns of the soul. Tell Mr. Wilder how often my mother has spoken to us about him, and how much we love him.'

"The joy of the woman in speaking of these things interested me much, and I thought I could do you a pleasure by transmitting to you this message in detail. How great and how faithful is our God, and how he knows how to employ the most trivial circumstances in accomplishing his designs of love.

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"Pray for us, and be assured of the sentiments of affection and Christian veneration with which I remain

"Your servant in Christ,

"THEO. RIVIER, PASTEUR."

Yes, "not even a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father," nor did that little child, whose fall and momentary danger has probably, under God, been the means of raising up many "to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The tract, "Village in the Mountains," has been translated at least into French, German, and Welsh; and in this country alone, 238,000 copies of it have been printed.

It was a great trial to Mr. Wilder's kind heart that, as in the providence of God his pecuniary means of doing good had been curtailed long before the receipt of Pastor Rivier's letters, he could not respond as largely as was formerly his wont to such appeals for aid. Still he sought to do what he could, by asking others to give to an object so worthy and so important. Very touching is it now to review copies of some of these solicitations.

There was an old gentleman, still living, the foundation of whose large fortune Mr. Wilder felt he had himself laid years before by a very profitable investment made for him in silk goods manufactured by these very people, who now needed help to finish their church. To this man Mr. Wilder applied, reminding him of the time they crossed the ocean together amid circumstances of great danger,

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and of their subsequent business relations; stating the present case of the mountain villagers whose skill had formerly turned so much to his benefit, and also expressing, as usual, best wishes for his future and eternal welfare. But the effort was in vain. The memory was short, the heart too cold; the purse weighed down its strings too heavily.

What a contrast between the two men, both over fourscore years of age, and necessarily near the end of their course in this world. Who would not choose for his own portion the Christian large-heartedness of the one, even should comparative paucity of earthly goods be its concomitant?

Efforts for the spread of the gospel in France, of which that in and about the "Village in the Mountains" was but a large exemplar, could not be hid under a bushel. Christians in England heard of Mr. Wilder's liberality to the various societies there. His name, as being a decided friend of true evangelical religion, became more and more known throughout Europe. Strangers like-minded flocked to his house and counting-room. These returning home, gave to Christian friends and others also fresh letters of introduction to him; and the day of judgment alone will reveal all the good received in Paris by many who little expected to find Christ in that gay emporium.

A few lines from a note received by Mr. Wilder in Nov., 1822, from a German professor, may serve as a single instance.

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"DEAR SIR—The conversation you honored me with last Saturday has made a deep impression on my mind, and has corroborated the conviction in which I have always been, that *our works can only be manifested by a living faith in the incalculable merits of our divine Redeemer Jesus Christ.*"

"Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," we shall see in another chapter how appropriately descriptive were these few words of the character of our departed friend, when for a season, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, he was still called to dwell in Vanity Fair.

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IX.

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Rom. 12 : 13.

To have a correct idea of Mr. Wilder in his foreign home, it is necessary to go back in imagination forty or fifty years to the days of the first Napoleon, and long before Louis Napoleon, following his uncle's example, had so much beautified the city of Paris. Turn now out of that great thoroughfare the Boulevard Poissonière into the "Rue de Petit Carreau," till you come to No. 18, one of the large old "hotels" famous in the time of Louis XV. Entering the heavy stone doorway, through which you catch a glimpse of extensive gardens and of orange-trees in the rear, go up the solid stone stairway till you come to the first upper story from the street. Then passing through an ante-room and the clerk's counting-room, you enter Mr. Wilder's private office. There he sits in the round morocco chair used by him through life, and before the writing-table at which he last sat in the New Jersey home from which he was taken to his heavenly rest.

As seated in that chair and engaged in his daily business before that desk, did John Vanderlyn insist upon painting the portrait which took the medal at the exhibition of paintings in Paris, and remains valuable still as a finished work of art, as well as from being a striking likeness of Mr. Wilder

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at that time. Poor Vanderlyn, always improvident, no hand of friendship, though often extended to him by Mr. Wilder and others, could give him permanent aid. At this particular period, much to his credit and much to his disadvantage, Vanderlyn was doubly hampered, being obliged by ties of gratitude to labor in the support of Aaron Burr, who, almost an outlaw after the death of Hamilton, had now for a time taken refuge in France. Aaron Burr had seen Vanderlyn when a boy in his father's house in Kingston, N. Y., had marked his dawning genius, had put him under the instruction of Col. Trumbull, and afterwards completed his art-education in the schools of Italy. Now of this kind act Burr reaped the benefit. Vanderlyn devoted himself to the service of his old patron, and finally attended his dying-bed on Staten Island. He himself, having attained the first rank of American painters, died in Kingston about 1852.

In the clerks' counting-room we see two desks, where the pleasant, good-hearted Gougain, and the more reticent Prevost, attend to the duties of their office. On the wall in the smaller room, near Mr. Wilder's desk, is a small painting in oil of his friend Baron Hottinguer, by strangers often taken for a likeness of himself. This picture was afterwards brought by him to this country, and long hung over the same library chair in his Bolton home, but was finally given back to the Hottinguer family through a grandson visiting this country in 1857, accompanied with a letter to the young man, in which Mr. Wilder says, "I confess I should experience greater reluctance in parting with this highly-appreciated souvenir, were it not that the endeared features of your grandfather are so indelibly imprinted on the tablet of my memory, that neither time, distance, nor circumstance can ever efface the impression." The letter concludes with the plainest and kindest Christian advice to the young Frenchman, and best wishes for his eternal welfare.

But to return to the Parisian counting-room of long ago. There young Professor Jonas King often came while pursuing the study of Arabic with the

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Baron de Sacy the celebrated linguist. Often from the more private office did prayer ascend to God, as when the same young professor sought divine direction as to whether he should "go up to Jerusalem."

Turning now from the landing to the ōther side of the stone staircase, we find the family apartments, nine or ten in number, and as is usually the French custom, all on the same floor. There was the salon with its hangings and furniture of green, which was literally often an oasis to many a disciple, otherwise in a desert land as to religious privileges. In this parlor was often heard the voice of prayer and praise, accompanying the preaching of His blessed gospel, by many a servant of Christ from America, England, Switzerland, or France itself.

Here was the birthplace of the Paris Bible and Tract and Missionary Societies. Under God, these owed their being to the circumstance of the indirect though powerful influence of Talleyrand, that wonderful man, who in some way, right or wrong, managed to retain position for himself through every succeeding revolution and dynasty. Mr. Wilder had, upon his first going abroad in 1804, been introduced to him by Dr. Jedidiah Morse as "a young gentleman of very fair character, and of great integrity, intelligence, and industry in his business, and deserving the confidence of all good men." Dr. Morse in another letter calls Mr. Wilder "my worthy young friend and parishioner," and

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says, "he visits France as an agent for a number of respectable merchants in Boston, and expects to remain a number of years in that capacity. Under these circumstances I thought it proper to make you acquainted with his character and merits, that he may share the protection and patronage of that government of which you are so distinguished and influential a member."

Talleyrand accepted the trust as requested by Dr. Morse, told Mr. Wilder to retain the letters, and come and claim protection from him in case of any difficulty during his residence in France. This gave Mr. Wilder boldness in doing what he knew was in itself right. The police always thought it expedient to wink at any assemblages under his roof, even should they exceed in number of persons present that which was strictly allowed by law.

The Paris Tract Society was formed in 1818, the Bible Society in 1819, the Missionary Society in 1822.

Of the Paris Bible and Tract Societies there was important need. The prejudice then strongly existing in France, passing, on account of England's late treatment of Napoleon, all usual bounds of hereditary feeling, rendered it, as already intimated, almost imperative that Bibles and tracts should bear other than the hated imprint, "London."

With the Paris Bible Society, Rev. Frederic Leo was prominently connected. He had first published the Roman-catholic version of the New Testament, which was the immediate occasion of the formation

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of the Society. Though a German by birth, he so identified himself with French efforts for French evangelization, and was so unwilling to submit to the English dictation of even good men, as to cause his friends sometimes much trouble and anxiety while defending him from unjust accusation. Mr. Drummond, a banker of London, and President of the Continental Society, always took Mr. Leo's part, as did other English Christians coming to Paris, and judging for themselves as to his work there. Mr. Wilder had much to do in the way of settling these difficulties and others of the kind.

With the Paris Bible Society were also associated the names of Lutteroth, Maron, Soulier, Blumhart, and Steinkoff, the two latter Germans. Owen and Pinkerton of the British Bible Society also took a deep interest in its work. It were impossible, without taking too much space, to retrace the many interesting relations of these gentlemen with Mr. Wilder, whose house was a constant place of meeting and consultation with them all.

There was much opposition in those days by many to Bible societies. At one of the early anniversaries in Paris, April 16, 1822, an offer was made through Mr. Wilder of a prize for the best essay in their favor. This offer, anonymous at the time, was made by Mr. Waddington, a friend of the Bible, then residing at St. Remy.

Mr. Wilder, in his address on this occasion—translated for him into French by his friend Baron de Staël, son of the celebrated Madame de Staël, in

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order that in that language the diction should be entirely correct—says,

"Those who may think proper to answer this public appeal, will doubtless understand that it will be necessary to show in a concise manner the consistency and harmony of the sacred Scriptures with sound philosophy; their influence in elevating the intellectual state of man; their importance in promoting the temporal interests of society; their tendency to ameliorate the civil condition of the human race; their pure and unrivalled morality; and above all, their essential value as the only infallible guide to spiritual and eternal happiness, by teaching fallen man that he can only be reconciled to God by his sovereign grace, through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ his Son.

"It is certain, as a matter of history, that the Bible has better secured the respect due to every class and rank of society; better ascertained the claims and duties of conjugal and filial relations, the mutual obligations of governments and people, the reciprocal interests of masters and servants, than all other books put together; while with it alone rests the merit of pointing to Jesus, and saying, from Genesis to the Revelation, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.'

"The time is not far distant when the printing and distribution of the sacred Scriptures will not be confined to a few individuals formed into societies, but whole nations will consider it their first

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object and highest privilege thus to promote the great and glorious cause of our divine Redeemer."

In June, 1818, it was Mr. Wilder's "sacred and delightful duty," to use his own expression, to transmit to the newly formed Paris Bible Society the salutations of the Massachusetts Bible Society, together with a donation from it of one hundred pounds in aid of Bible work in France, which sum he had received from Rev. Mr. Channing, secretary, and his friend John Tappan, treasurer of the Massachusetts Society.

In the work of tract distribution, after his first introduction to it in London, Mr. Wilder ever remained much interested. In France, not only for his own journeys, but for those of his friends, he would always provide a full supply of the tracts published at first through Mr. Hillhouse, and afterwards by the Paris Tract Society; which little books appear now, in their outward finish, in comparison to those of more modern requirement, rough indeed, and brown, but which in themselves were instinct with life, and beautiful as are the feet of those bringing glad tidings.

The incident related in connection with "the Village in the Mountains," of the involuntary distribution of Testaments and tracts, was, strange to say, not the only one of the kind in Mr. Wilder's experience. A friend, travelling with him on another occasion, wrote, April 18, 1819, "We met with no accident on our journey, except the breaking of the box in front of our carriage, which being filled

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with Testaments and tracts, they were distributed through the village of Vaudreuil. The horses *happened* (?) to be very gay this post, and making considerable noise on the pavements, we were not aware of the accident, though multitudes ran after us; but we heard nothing, until the box and its contents were distributed through the street in the mud. Unfortunately some were injured; otherwise it was not to be regretted that an opportunity was offered of giving means of instruction to those who collected about the carriage. Many were able to read, and others said they had children or husbands who could; so that it may be considered a providential event. Mr. Wilder addressed the crowd from the elevated seat of the carriage to evident effect. They seemed surprised that not even the uninjured books were taken by him. As it was a Roman-catholic region, I trust good will be done by this means."

French tracts furnished by Mr. Wilder to a friend, Mr. Money, were actually received by the prior of the monastery of La Trappe, he promising to distribute them to the monks.

With the "Continental Society," whose headquarters were in London, Mr. Wilder became connected as vice-president. Its work, like that since pursued in this country by the "American and Foreign Christian Union," was the evangelization of Europe. Mr. Wilder's correspondence with the Rev. Isaac Saunders, Secretary of the Continental Society, as also with its President, Mr. H. Drum-

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mond, is very interesting. His advice in detail as to the best methods of carrying on the work of the Society, seems in many cases to have been followed by these gentlemen with many expressions of sincere respect.

Of the French society for the promotion of "good morals" Mr. Wilder was also a member, though not able to affect its course as much as was his desire. Many had joined it who, not having felt the power of the gospel upon their own hearts, were too much disposed to leave Christianity out of the question, when aiming to promote morality. Others again, thoughtless and imprudent, careless of the distinction between church and state, would push their peculiar views until almost compromitting themselves with the government.

Of the Paris Missionary Society, the Rev. Dr. Jonas King, whose marked and kindly countenance is now again so welcome in his native land, was the first missionary. With regard to his appointment as such, Mr. Wilder wrote to Jeremiah Evarts, Esq., Secretary of the American Board,

"PARIS, Dec. 31, 1822.

"MY DEAR SIR—Having just received a line from our worthy brother in the Lord, Professor King, and presuming that it will be interesting to you and to the respective members of the Committee of your Missionary Society to know that he has safely arrived at Malta, I here inclose it, by which you will learn that he was about to embark, with that zeal-

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ous and faithful disciple of Christ, Rev. Pliny Fisk, for Alexandria; thence to proceed to Jerusalem, 'not knowing the things which may befall them there; neither counting their lives dear,' if so be they can win souls to Christ.

"I also profit by this occasion to inclose you the circular and address of the 'Paris Missionary Society,' which, praised be God, is at length established in this city. You will observe that Mr. King has gone out as our first missionary; but this, you must know, is only for one year from the first of September last; and his expenses are of course paid by the Paris Society until the first of next September. This was done in order to give your Committee time to deliberate and decide on the proposition which Mr. King made to them previous to his leaving Paris, and to which I doubt not they will readily accede; particularly as near three hundred dollars a year will be furnished to your Society by individuals in Europe, towards defraying Mr. King's expenses during the second and third year of his residence in Palestine.

"The friends of Zion have certainly much reason to bless God and rejoice, when they consider that though, in 1818, not a single society existed in this modern Babylon for the object of promoting the glorious cause of our divine Redeemer, there now exists here, by the blessing of the same benign Being, a 'Bible Society,' a 'Missionary Society,' a 'Religious Tract Society,' a 'Moral Christian,' or in other words, a 'Peace Society,' an 'African Socie-

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ty,' and a 'Prison Society,' all in active operation; and the members of the respective committees daily manifesting an increased zeal for the accomplishment of the great and glorious objects they have in view. Surely this is none other than the work of God, and unto him be rendered all the honor, glory, and praise.

"Recommending all these pious and philanthropic institutions to your prayers, and wishing you, above all, spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus,

"I salute you with Christian affection,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

The following records in a letter from Dr. King to Mrs. Wilder, written soon after Mr. Wilder's death, are inserted with many thanks. They give many reminiscences of deep interest regarding the early friend who, a few weeks before his death, found it a high pleasure and a privilege to see him once again in the flesh.

"NEW YORK, March 24, 1865.

"DEAR MRS. WILDER— . . . . On examining my journal kept in Paris, I find this record, September 6, 1822: 'In the evening attended a meeting at Mr. Wilder's for the organization of the Paris Missionary Society. Mr. Wilder proposed that the Society should grant me some aid, and employ me as their first missionary, to go out under their direction for the present year. The Rev. Daniel Wilson from London, (since Bishop of Calcutta,) after a very animated speech, offered to contribute expressly for

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this object one hundred francs. Another gentleman, Mr. Pope, arose and said he would give fifty. Another offered twenty; several, ten. The Society at once voted five hundred francs, and I found myself obliged, without the least preparation, to arise and address this interesting assembly. There were present twelve or fourteen clergymen, six of whom were French Protestant ministers at Paris.'

"It was at your house, as you will doubtless remember, Sunday, the 22d of September, that we had that most solemn, affecting, and interesting season in celebrating together the Lord's supper, administered by the Rev. Dr. Gardiner Spring, a few days previous to my leaving for Jerusalem, when we all wept, and felt that it was probably the last time we should ever meet on a similar occasion in this world. It was, I believe, the *last*. Your husband had previously given me a folio blank volume, beautifully bound, in which to keep my journal in Palestine, and in which he requested me to write first a little sketch of my early life, which I did. In that journal I find the following:

"'It is in compliance with the wishes of this friend, who has for ten months past given me a most cordial welcome to his house; who has aided me and strengthened me by his counsels, his prayers, his heavenly conversation; who, with his interesting, amiable, and pious companion, visited me, and ministered abundantly to all my wants when on a bed of sickness, and apparently on the borders of the grave; who has been one of the principal

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instruments in the hands of God of enabling me to enter on the mission abovementioned, (to Jerusalem,) that I take my pen to trace a few lines of a life all unworthy, and which cannot be interesting except to a few particular friends.'

"The letter of Pliny Fisk, asking me to come and join him in his mission in Palestine for three years, in consequence of the death of Levi Parsons, I received at your house; and after retiring to your boudoir to spread the letter before the Lord, and to seek of him direction, I returned to Mr. Wilder in his office, who to my surprise addressed me thus: 'Since it has pleased Providence to throw you in my way, and that I have now for so long a time had the pleasure of your acquaintance, and since it has pleased God to send this letter to you through my hands, I offer, if you will go to Jerusalem, one hundred and fifty dollars a year for three years, after which I think it your decided duty to return to America.'

"In consequence of this unexpected offer, I wrote letters, at the suggestion of Mr. Wilder, to Louis Mertens, Esq., of Brussels; to Thomas Waddington, Esq., of St. Remy; Claude Cromlin, Esq., of Amsterdam; and John Venning, Esq., of St. Petersburg in Russia, and received such favorable answers, that I decided to go on the mission abovementioned.

"In my letter to the American Board, written August 12, 1822, having mentioned the letter of Pliny Fisk to me, I find noted: 'I read this to Mr.

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Wilder, whose name is known to you all, and whose Christian beneficence flows in a thousand channels, refreshing the widow and the orphan, the poor and the afflicted, and causing many a verdant spot to be seen in the midst of this barren desert;' informing the Board of the liberal provision Mr. Wilder and others had made for my support.

"Whenever I think of you and your beloved, lamented husband, my mind naturally reverts to that hospitable dwelling which you occupied when I was in Paris in 1821 and 1822. There I always met with a cordial welcome. There I used to meet almost every Sunday evening the Rev. Frederic Monod, who afterwards became one of the most distinguished ministers in France, and whose friendship continued to the end of his life.

"The influence Mr. Wilder exerted on many in Paris, and on persons of distinction, was, as I had every reason to believe, very great, and always for good. He was always spoken of in terms of praise and commendation.

"Early in 1822, when I was living in a French family, for the purpose of improving myself in the French language, there was held at my lodgings, in an upper room, the first, as I suppose, Monthly Concert for Prayer ever held in France. There were only three or four persons present, two of whom were Americans, Mr. Wilder and myself. It was at a house in what is called the *Cité*, and near the church of Nôtre Dame where the tocsin was first sounded for the massacre of the Protestants on St.

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Bartholomew's day; and before the close of the year, in consequence of my being sent out as a missionary to Palestine, that Monthly Concert was extended and kept throughout France, in all the Protestant churches, at 7 o'clock P. M., the first Monday in every month."

Dr. King proceeds to state the facts above given of Talleyrand's reception by Dr. Morse and others in America, and the doctor's introduction of Mr. Wilder to Talleyrand, and adds, "Having such a powerful friend, Mr. Wilder could fearlessly do what a Frenchman would not dare to do, and meetings could be held at his house, in numbers greater than the law allowed, without fear of prosecution; and once recognized as a kind of asylum, it continued to be so after the exile of Napoleon, and when Talleyrand had passed away. What a singular chain of events: Talleyrand in Charlestown and Boston, Mr. Wilder in Paris; the Missionary Society formed at his house, and I sent out as a missionary to Jerusalem; and many important events, as for instance the conversion and martyrdom of Asaad Esh Shidiak, in connection with that mission.

"Mr. Wilder made it a general rule, in his intercourse with men of business, to say some word which he thought might be for the good of their souls. I remember going out with him on a Sunday to visit in families that were poor and needy, to speak to them on the subject of religion, and to grant some pecuniary aid when he thought it nec-

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essary. People from all parts of Europe came to see him; and while he received them with the greatest kindness and cordiality, he showed to all, by his conduct and conversation, that he was a firm believer in the sacred Scriptures, and a true disciple of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"And now, dear madam, allow me to express to you again, and to your children, my sympathy in the bereavement to which you and they have just been called. And may the God of all consolation comfort your hearts; and may we all be prepared to meet the dear friend, whose loss we now mourn, in that world where there is no sin and no sorrow, and where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes.

"With kind and affectionate remembrance to all your children, I remain, dear madam, your true and sympathizing friend,

"JONAS KING."

Dr. King's connection with Mr. Wilder has been narrated by their friend Dr. Hallock, in the tract, "THE ONLY SON," published by the American Tract Society, the brief sketch being here strikingly valuable as showing some of Mr. Wilder's peculiar characteristics.

Soon after the Rev. Pliny Fisk and Rev. Levi Parsons left their mountain homes in Western Massachusetts, near the close of 1819, as the first American missionaries to Palestine, their young friend Jonas King, from the same neighborhood, was elected professor in Amherst college, and proceeded to Paris to pursue the study of Arabic with the celebrated De Sacy. He there became familiar with an American

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gentleman, then at the head of one of the first commercial houses in Paris, to whose care his correspondence was addressed.

In February, 1822, the lamented Parsons died, and Rev. Mr. Fisk without delay addressed a letter to Mr. King, requesting that he would meet him at Malta, and in the place of Rev. Mr. Parsons, accompany him as a missionary to Palestine; and fearing delay by waiting the action of the American Board of Missions, he in the same enclosure requested Mr. King's mercantile friend not only to second his invitation, but if possible to raise the sum of $1,500, requisite for his support for three years.

Mr. King, receiving the letter in the merchant's counting-room, retired to his private office to read it. Oppressed with the weight of the proposition it contained, he spent an hour in prayer for divine direction; and hoping to gain further light as to the path of duty, sought the merchant's advice. He returned to the counting-room, and asked with deep solicitude, "What shall I do?" Said his friend, "Go." "But," said he, "what will become of my aged and infirm parents in America?" "I will be a son to them in your stead," replied his friend. "Then," said Mr. King, "I go up to Jerusalem, 'not knowing the things that shall befall me there.'"

"Now," said the merchant, "sit down at this desk, and write to my friends Thomas Waddington of St. Remy, France, Louis Mertens of Brussels, Claude Cromlin of Amsterdam, and John Venning of St. Petersburg: state to them the circumstances, and that you are willing to go; tell them I will give one-fifth of the $1,500, and leave it to their decission whether they will join me in filling up the amount." By the return of the mails, it appeared that God had put it into the hearts of these gentlemen cheerfully to respond to the appeal by enclosing each $300, making the sum required; and Mr. King lost no time in preparing for his departure.

A few months previous to this, Mr. King had established the Monthly Concert of Prayer in his own hired upper chamber in Paris, which had been attended with increasing interest; a large concourse assembled in the church of the Ora-

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toire to listen to his farewell address and join in commending him to the God of all grace; he was cheered in a similar manner, on his way, by Christian assemblies at Lyons, Nismes, Montpelier, and Marseilles, where he embarked for Malta, whence he proceeded with Mr. Fisk to Jerusalem; and he is now the well-known, persecuted, but laborious and successful missionary at Athens.

His friend the merchant from time to time wrote to the solitary parents, enclosing some tokens of regard "from their affectionate son:" the next year he returned to America; and early in the spring of 1824 he was at Northampton, about twenty-five miles from the parents, meditating a visit to their humble abode. He applied to the landlord, who furnished him a wagon with *his little son* for a driver; and freighted with a bag of groceries which extended the whole length of the wagon, they set off early in the morning; and after encountering snow-drifts and other obstacles by the way, arrived at the cottage about two in the afternoon.

Leaving the lad with the wagon in the street, the gentleman knocked, saying as he entered, "It is a chill, uncomfortable day, friends; would you be so kind as to allow a stranger to warm himself a little by your fire?" He was welcomed and seated between the aged couple, in whom he distinctly recognized the features of their son Jonas, and they in turn fixed on him a scrutinizing eye. After a short pause, he said deliberately,

"I once had a friend who said to me, 'What shall I do?' Said I, 'Go.' 'But what,' said he, 'will become of my aged and infirm parents in America?' I replied, 'I will be a son to them in your stead.' 'Then,' said he, 'I go up to Jerusalem, 'not knowing the things that shall befall me there.''

Instantly the aged couple sprung to him, exclaiming, "This is Mr. W——," and almost overpowered him with their tears and caresses. "Let us pray," said the father; and they unburdened their hearts at the throne of mercy.

Scarcely were they again seated, when the mother took from the shelf a new quarto Bible, saying she hoped her friend would not blame her for paying ten dollars for it out of the fifty he had sent her a few months previous. "Our

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old eyes," she said, "could not well read the small print of the other Bible. I told Mr. King I did not believe we could make any better use of the money, or should ever be the poorer for buying a Bible that we could read; it is a great comfort to us." Their friend expressed his approbation of the purchase, admired the Bible, and before he returned it to the shelf, slipped into it unperceived a ten-dollar bill; which she afterwards wrote him had been found on the floor when they were reading the Bible, and which she recognized as from the hand of God, having no knowledge by what means the exact amount expended had thus come again into their hands.

After a brief interchange of confidence and affection, she said to her esteemed guest, "I presume, sir, you have not dined, and must be in need of refreshment. I am very sorry we have not a cup of tea to offer you, but we have some nice ham and fresh eggs, which I will immediately prepare." Her friend remarked, "There is a bag in the wagon, containing several articles from 'your son;' perhaps there may be tea among them."

The bag, with no little effort, was transferred from the wagon to the cottage floor, and the mother addressed herself to the task of taking out its contents. Among packages of flour, rice, loaf-sugar, coffee, chocolate, raisins, and other articles, each of which she held up with new expressions of delight, as received from one she so much loved, she at length came to a package of four pounds of hyson tea, when she held it out to the father with streaming eyes, saying, "Look here, papa, Jonas is the same dear good boy that he always was: he knew we were out of tea sometimes: he don't forget his poor father and mother." Then opening a package of Turkey figs, "And is this also," said she, "from Jerusalem? Papa, was there ever such a son as Jonas?" By this time all hearts were overflowing. "Let us pray," said the father; and the exploring of the treasures was suspended, while they again united in thanksgiving to God.

It was not long before the little company were seated at a well-furnished table, refreshed by the gifts of the kind "son," mingling their sympathies, and recounting all the

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way in which they had been led. While thus conversing, the merchant affectionately asked, "Do you never regret the sacrifice you have made in giving up your only son to be a missionary?" The aged father replied,

"'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' and shall I withhold my only son from obeying the command of our ascended Saviour, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature?'"

All present were deeply affected, a tear standing in the eye even of the young driver. They again bowed in prayer: both the father and the merchant led in turn, commending the little company, the absent son, and a sin-ruined world to the God of missions.

The interview was an hour bright with the beams of the Sun of righteousness amid the dark pilgrimage of life, an oasis in the desert, a season never to be forgotten by any one of the four persons who thus met for the first and the last time on earth.

That young driver, as he afterwards distinctly stated, here first had his mind impressed with the sacredness of the work of foreign missions. He gave his heart to Christ; pursued a thorough course of education; went forth to the heathen, and was no other than Henry Lyman, the noble martyr who fell by the side of Munson, in 1834, among the bloody Battas of Sumatra.

The aged father, in his will, bequeathed to the merchant, for the purchase of a book in token of his love, the sum of five dollars, which at his death was paid to the widow for the old small-print Bible, which is still possessed as a precious memento. The widow has entered into rest; and the stranger passing a rural graveyard in South Hawley, where the scenery opens in magnificence and beauty, reads on the tombstone of the father his reply, just quoted, to the question, whether he ever regretted the gift to missions of his ONLY SON.

The friendship and love between Mr. Wilder and Dr. King remained ever undiminished. Deeply

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interesting was it to witness their last meeting on earth; to see the worn yet animated missionary coming back, energetic still, from his many "testifyings to the Greeks," even as did Paul on Mars' hill itself, "of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," to greet the now venerable friend who, with beautiful white locks, and with the now trembling hand which years before had helped speed him on his way, sat waiting to receive him.

But to return to Paris, its societies, and the renewed efforts of Protestantism fifty years ago, which then had to struggle with various difficulties. The drooping spirits of those pastors who still held fast to the truth were often strengthened by the encouragement given them by Mr. Wilder and other Christian friends met with under his roof. Protestant pastors in distant parts of France would write for aid in support of their work to the "American unknown to them except by name, but who, they understood, took a deep interest in religious matters."

The subject of slavery, the solution of which God has now himself wrought out in so wonderful a manner before our eyes, like an old Bible-deliverance in answer to the cries of the oppressed, early attracted the attention of French as well as English Christians. Those were the pioneer days of Wilberforce, Clarkson, and other champions of freedom. In Paris a committee was appointed to do what they could, of which Recusat was secretary. To Mr.

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Wilder often came gentlemen from England, introduced as taking especial interest in this cause. Among the French, perhaps none took a more enlightened and earnest view of it than young Baron Auguste de Staël, to whose spiritual interests, judging from frequent expressions in his letters, Mr. Wilder must have been of signal advantage. A few lines from a letter written to Mr. Wilder a few months after his return to America, will best show Baron de Staël's views of this subject.

"In this country," France, "religious interest at this moment concentrates itself upon the abolition of slavery. Can you not take advantage of your stay in the United States to promote this good work? Not a day passes but that my very heart groans to think of the stain still attached to your admirable country. Can it be possible that slavery will be introduced into the territory of Illinois? I trust not."

To such appeals Mr. Wilder would respond in like spirit, ever being opposed to slavery and its attendant evils, and earnestly desirous that the day of glorious freedom for all, the dawn of which he was indeed permitted to see, might soon appear.

To correct a mistake, and also to show Mr. Wilder's strong individuality, even in his methods of doing good to friends in the humbler walks of life, we give in his own words a correct version of an anecdote every now and then appearing in the newspapers under the heading, "A Quaker in Paris."

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"Having for several years been accustomed to receive a New-year's complimentary visit from some hundreds of the different workmen to whom I gave employment more or less through the year, and who of course expected in return to receive some little remuneration in the shape of from one franc to five, I resolved on one of these occasions, after the establishment of our Bible society in Paris, to ascertain how far, in the estimation of some dozen packers at the custom-house, the sacred volume would be appreciated in preference to money. I therefore prepared some dozen or more Bibles by placing inside of the outward wrapper a gold piece of forty francs—$8.

"On the entrance of these custom-house packers, amid a crowd of other workmen who thronged the reception-room, after they had wished me a happy New-year, I said to them, 'My friends, you have had during the year now past an arduous task, packing so many more cases for me than I ever before sent through the custom-house in any one year, and I wish to show my appreciation of your services by presenting you something more valuable than the ordinary five-franc piece you have usually received;' and taking up one of the Bibles before me in one hand and a five-franc piece in the other, I said to one of the older men standing a little in advance of the others, 'Here is the blessed Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments; the former giving a history of the creation of the world, and the dealings of God towards our first parents and to people under the antediluvian, Abrahamic, and Mosaic dispensations; and the latter, giving an account of the birth, the life, the sacrifices, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. This blessed book assures us that 'there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved,' but the name of Jesus; and this inspired volume also commands us to 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' assuring us that all other things shall be added thereunto. Now, my friends, I offer each of you one of these blessed books, or a five-franc piece, whichever you may prefer.' The elder of the number replied that he presumed the book was all that I represented it to be,

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but as it would not put bread into the mouths of his children, '*ma foi*, I prefer the five-franc piece.'

"After handing it to him, still holding the Bible in my other hand, and taking up another piece of money, I addressed the next man: 'Now mind what I say. This Bible commands us, I repeat, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and rest assured, my friends, that all other things which are necessary for our present comfort and future well-being will be added thereunto.' 'Well,' said he, 'the book may be a very good one, but as I do not know how to read, I choose the ready money.' I accordingly handed him the coin.

"And thus I proceeded, extolling the value of the holy Scriptures and the advantages those would derive who had faith in my declarations, to say nothing of the unspeakable benefits which would accrue to the everlasting happiness of those who should find grace to believe in its divine precepts, and manifest their faith by a corresponding conduct. But from the first to the last of the eleven men, all made choice of the five-franc piece.

"A lad some fourteen or fifteen years of age still remained. It was his department to mark the initials and numbers on the outside of the cases, and he was the last of the custom-house people present. He approached and said that as he knew how to read very well, and as he thought it would give his mother and his sisters great pleasure to hear him read such an interesting book as I had represented this to be, for his part he would take the book, which I accordingly had the satisfaction of handing him in presence of all the others. So eager was the boy to have immediate ocular demonstration of the contents of the volume, that he at once took off the cover, when out fell to the floor the forty-franc gold piece therein deposited.

"Judge of the consternation, the conflicting emotions depicted on the countenances of the others, who saw at once the mistake they had made in giving the preference to the money rather than the Bible. They asked if all the other books there piled on the desk contained the same treasure. I answered, Yes, and confirmed it by opening several of the

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volumes, displaying in each the golden piece in question, which caused them, Frenchman-like, to smite their breasts, stamp on the floor, and, retiring, to exclaim they would never again be guilty of similar folly, but hereafter would yield a listening ear to any recommendation that might come from me.

"Being absent the following New-year at the South of France, and leaving the country before another came round, I had not an opportunity of testing the sincerity of their declarations; indeed it was an experiment that could not fairly bear repetition.

"The lad called on me several times, and expressed with grateful emotions how highly his mother and sisters appreciated the sacred volume, and as a testimony, wished to purchase several Testaments, which, however, I had the pleasure to furnish him without money and without price, together with many religious tracts for gratuitous distribution. Thus terminated, so far as my knowledge extends, the New-year doings of the 'Quaker in Paris.'"

But Mr. Wilder's walks as a Christian while in France, were usually among those dwelling rather on the heights of worldly prosperity, where oftener than in the valleys the feet are apt to stumble. That he was kept "from falling" was very much due, under God, to the real, not mere nominal consecration he made of himself and all that was his to the service of his Master. To this great end he wished to turn every worldly advantage.

His home was not so much his own, as the place where he could use true hospitality towards all men, "especially to them who were of the household of faith." Before all, high and low, he sought to maintain his Christian walk and conversation. Family prayer, commenced at the time of his marriage, was never discontinued, let who might be present.

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It were difficult, perhaps impossible, to give all the names of those well known in this land who enjoyed this truly Christian rendezvous; statesmen, authors, civilians, clergymen and others from abroad, mingling with men of like spirit on this neutral American ground.

Here Spurtzeim, for a time Mr. Wilder's family physician, disputed with his compeer Dr. Gall about some technicality connected with their new science, or taking a furtive survey, under the chandelier, of a young American statesman, pronounced upon him aside, to Mr. Wilder, the verdict, "He has internal ambition and external modesty enough to place him on the throne, did circumstances favor; nor has his memory sufficient principle to remember the steps whereby he reached it.' Here came the pale young Summerfield, begging to be allowed to rest; saying, "My Father above does not require me to work now; I must take care of my health." Oh, rest early attained by him, where there is no sickness, nor sighing, nor any more pain. Here Washington Irving, afterwards so world-renowned, made himself at home, remembering in long after years many little incidents connected with these visits. How strange now to read, at the close of a long letter to Mr. Wilder from Mr. Drummond on Society business, the postscript written Dec. 2, 1820: "We have just got the work of a countryman of yours, with which we are delighted; it is called 'The Sketch-book, by Geoffrey Crayon.' It is one of the most beautiful books I ever read."

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To Mr. Wilder's home also came Everett, showing promise of what he afterwards became. Here too the ambassador John Armstrong made arrangements about returning in time of war to this country, improving special advantages enjoyed by Mr. Wilder. Here Albert Gallatin conversed with Rev. Mark Wilks, described as "a man of good sense, principles well established, what would be called in America an orthodox Christian," and became so much interested in him and his work as pastor of the Oratoire, as afterwards to send a contribution towards his support.

Here a young Bostonian, afterwards ambassador to Stockholm, as Mr. Wilder was about to cross the ocean with a young lady of note, to whom the young man was much attached, sought to obtain Mr. Wilder's promise to speak a good word in his favor, nor let him be forgotten—a task, in the sequel, made no easier from the fact that this attractive young lady received two other offers on board the ship from gentlemen, who each sought to retain Mr. Wilder on his own side. The first claimant, however, in the end secured the prize.

The American clergy were also well represented then as now in Paris. Drs. Matthias Bruen, John M. Mason, Gardiner Spring, Edward Robinson, Dwight, Chauncey, Goodrich, Gallaudet, and others, coming from time to time, either preached themselves in Mr. Wilder's parlor, or listened to the voice and exchanged greeting with their brethren of the English, Scotch, and European churches of

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every sect and name—such as the simple-hearted, conscientious Baptist Noel and his brother Gerard, Daniel Wilson, since Bishop of Calcutta, Billings of the Bible Society, Mejanel of the Continental Society, sometimes carried away by enthusiasm, but in the success of his efforts often belying the fears of more prudent friends; Francis Cunningham, Cocquerel, Joseph Price, a Friend; Adolphe and Frederic Monod; or Wolff, the eccentric Jewish missionary, whose romantic marriage and peculiar course so much for a time interested the religious public. Around him and his patron the Hon. and Rev. Lewis Way might sometimes a circle gather, the latter perhaps telling of his escape, through the protection of a strong police force engaged by Mr. Wilder, from a Parisian mob, naturally enraged at the sight of him, an Englishman, entering Paris in Napoleon's own green travelling carriage, which he, Mr. Way, had purchased after Waterloo, and used, from want of thought, on this occasion.

Rev. Charles Cook of the Methodist church did much good in the South of France during his visit there. At Mr. Wilder's house one evening, the Rev. Mr. Hawtrey was also present with members of other denominations, to hold a religious service. Mr. Cook, being aware that Mr. Hawtrey was too demonstrative, proposed that he, Mr. Hawtrey, should do the praying, and he, Mr. Cook, the groaning, or responses, which, after all, he did not render audibly.

Scotland was sometimes well represented by the

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noble brothers Haldane, whose best commission as preachers of the gospel was the blessing of the Holy Spirit attending their labors. To them, under God, was due much of the revival of true religion in Geneva, awakening the spirit of Gaussen, Merle d'Aubigné, Col. Tronchin, and Rev. Cæsar Malan, who also honored Mr. Wilder with their society and friendship, and gladly welcomed him sometimes to their Switzer home. Dr. Jonas King says that Dr. Gaussen, speaking of the Haldanes, remarked that they spoke French very little, but *pointed* out to him and his fellow-students passage after passage of the word of God. Strong testimony this to the power of the sword of the Spirit used simply and directly.

Dr. Malan and Mr. Wilder ever remained warmly attached, and many letters of introduction of friends, one to the other, passed to and fro on the Atlantic. But Mr. Wilder could never quite fall in with the views of assurance entertained by his more enthusiastic friend, himself usually speaking of his hopes for a blessed future with the condition added, "if my faith fail not." Of the power and love of his blessed Saviour, he had indeed full assurance; of the steadfastness of his own heart, except as "kept by the mighty power of God," none whatever. But nobly at the meetings in Mr. Wilder's parlor would often resound some of Dr. Malan's fine hymns, original in their music as well as composition, in singing which Mr. Wilder loved to join.

As sometimes present at these meetings, may

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be added the name of Felix Neff, and of many laymen of devout and interesting character; Thomas Erskine and Gen. Macauley, Butterworth and Lord Calthorpe bringing from England greeting to the new societies in Paris, rejoicing with Drummond at having received such "glorious documents in French as their Reports:" Waddington from St. Remy, Claude Cromlin of Amsterdam, Mertens of Brussels, at first known by Mr. Wilder through mere business channels, afterwards intimately associated with him as a friend of Christ; Venning, the friend of the Russian Prince Galitzin, coming fresh from his Bible work among the prisons of St. Petersburg—all showing the spirit they were of, ready promptly and freely to contribute to the support of young Jonas King. These all perhaps compared notes as to the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom; sometimes with Mr. Money, long a resident of India, one of whose children, "Little Henry," has been carried by his "Bearer" into many hearts and homes all over the world; or with those true noblemen of the best French regime, the Duc de Broglie, and his brother-in-law Baron de Staël, the Marquis de Jaufort, Count Admiral Ver Huell, and others.

Such were some of the servants of the Lord who, in the house of this modern Gaius, found true refreshment for both soul and body.

Rev. Dr. Robertson of the Episcopal church, now in this country, states, "I met one evening at Mr. Wilder's, at an informal gathering, seventeen persons, belonging to five or six different nations.

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The Bible was read, and two or three prayers offered, and thus an hour was pleasantly taken up with devotional services."

An American merchant wrote to Mr. Wilder soon after leaving Paris, "Your house appeared to me the only spot where a ray of vital piety was visible in that great and otherwise brilliant city. On the one side were Catholics, on the other Unitarians. How you have been preserved from the frowns of the one and the sneers of the other, can only be known to Him who has not placed you in this situation for nothing. You have certainly gained a foothold in the midst of quicksands."

In 1820, Mr. and Mrs. Wilder visited London, principally with a view to attend the religious anniversaries held there in May. Here, from many friends already spoken of as visiting them in Paris, also from Mr. Bayford, the Barings, Mr. Bates whose early acquaintance with Mr. Wilder in Mr. William Gray's office has been mentioned, Lord Gambier, and others, they received much polite attention. All this intercourse, much of it with earnest Bible Christians, bringing together heart with heart, helped forward the good work in France; for aiding which so many thought Mr. Wilder to be especially qualified by grace, nature, and nationality.

This intercourse with truly pious people, together with the constant ebb and flow of Christian society about his own home, could not but have a decided reflex influence upon him, who ever made it welcome. The simplicity of Christian utterance

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common to the sincere followers of Christ in Europe, where, at that time and in some respects, greater difference was made than now between the church and the world, visibly affected his own spirit. He too more and more adopted the language of Zion as a thing for daily use, not set apart for the Sabbath. His light, if not kept trimmed and burning, would have been extinguished by the damps of worldliness around; not that it can be said of him, or of any mere man, that his motives were wholly pure, and heart free from all self-gratulation on account of good accomplished by his means. No, he felt his own imperfections; yet, thanks be to God for the grace given to his servant truly to glorify him amid most difficult circumstances. Easier far, as many have found it, is it to speak of Christ and his salvation among the poor and lowly, than to acknowledge him simply and constantly among the rich, the learned, the fashionable, and the great.

There was much in Mr. Wilder's natural temperament to make it easier for him than for some others to do this; but we can still and the more magnify in him the one great Triune God, his Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier.

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X.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings. Prov. 22: 29.

THE above promise is not often literally fulfilled; but in the good providence of God, Mr. Wilder, by being a near eye-witness of scenes of royal grandeur, was to be prepared to testify in many a humble prayer-meeting in his own republican land, to the vanity and unsubstantiality of it all.

The time of his residence abroad was one of great and momentous political changes. The French ship of state, which had been so nearly a total wreck at the time of the revolution of 1789, had, at the date of Mr. Wilder's first arrival in Paris, righted itself anew under the master-hand of the great Napoleon, who just then boldly assumed the title of emperor.

Among Mr. Wilder's papers is found quite an unpretending note of invitation, which, however, introduced him to one of the most brilliant scenes of pomp and power the world perhaps has ever witnessed. Napoleon the emperor, in the height of his glory, was to marry a princess of the house of Austria. Mr. Wilder was asked to represent the United States on the occasion, as the authorized ambassador, Hon. John Armstrong, was sick and unable to be there.

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Latour Maubrey has already been spoken of as Mr. Wilder's teacher in the French language, and being afterwards employed as secretary and interpreter by the Emperor Napoleon, who himself understood only French and Italian, and often found it necessary, especially on the battle-field, to issue orders in other languages. Latour Maubrey, from being thus in the emperor's immediate personal service, rose to a high social position, both political and pecuniary. Through him Mr. Wilder learned many interesting facts; among others, some as to Napoleon's second marriage.

"Notwithstanding Latour Maubrey's high elevation at the court of the Tuileries, he would still frequently dine with me in private at my own house, and would often relate to me incidents which had occurred in connection with the emperor, which he would not have dared to unfold to a Frenchman, fearing to come in contact with a French spy. By this means I became acquainted with many circumstances upon which history is silent. For the authenticity of the following I can vouch.

"A few months after Napoleon had divorced himself from Josephine, he proceeded with an army of 275,000 men for the conquest of Austria. Upon the approach of this army to Vienna, the Emperor Francis fled precipitately with his family from the palace of Schonbrunn to Prague; and the same day Napoleon took up his quarters in that splendid palace, and selected for his sleeping apartment that of Maria Louise, where for several days he passed most of his time dictating letters, while Latour served as his amanuensis.

"Such was the haste in which Maria Louise, the daughter of the Emperor Francis, had been obliged to quit her apartment, that she left a beautiful portrait of herself hanging over the fireplace. 'I observed,' said Latour, 'that the emperor, while walking up and down, dictating the aforesaid

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letters to me, would frequently, using his eye-glass, fix his eyes on this portrait. Several days thus rolled away, when he said to me, 'Go call Berthier the Prince of Neufchatel.'

"'On the entrance of this prince, Napoleon said in his quick and abrupt manner, 'Berthier, I appoint you my envoy extraordinary, to proceed forthwith to Prague, and ask of the Emperor Francis the hand of his daughter Maria Louise for me in marriage; and return here with his reply with as little delay as possible.'

"'A few days after,' continued Latour, 'while the emperor was dictating to me a letter in the great 'Hall of Reception' in the same palace, the Prince of Neufchatel entered, accompanied by an envoyé of the Emperor of Austria, who, after being presented to Napoleon with the accustomed ceremonies, addressed him as follows:

"'May it please your majesty, I am authorized by my master to express to your majesty the great satisfaction and honor which he should derive from an alliance with so distinguished a general and sovereign, whose achievements command the admiration of all; but as the veins of Maria Louise contain the blood of emperors and queens through several generations from the Hapsburg family to the present day, my master the emperor has serious apprehensions that his daughter may consider the nobility of the Emperor Napoleon as of too recent date to be a suitable match for one in the enjoyment of her ancient and distinguished position.'

"'During the delivery of this harangue, the Emperor Napoleon continued to pace the apartment with little or no apparent emotion. But at its close, he at once, turning to the envoyé, said, 'Go tell your master the Emperor of Austria, that the difference between him and me is this, that *my* nobility commences in me, and that *his* ends in him.''

"'There was no more question, it seems, as regards the ancestry and imperial descent from the Hapsburg family. Suffice it to say, that a peace with Austria was soon concluded, and the Prince of Swartzenburg, in a month or two, conducted Maria Louise in triumph to the capital of France, where I, as Secretary of Legation pro tem. of the American

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Legation, had the honor to represent the United States at the marriage ceremony."

The dress required to be worn by Mr. Wilder on that occasion was, as may be imagined, in true court style, from the golden shoe-buckles to the immense cocked hat, now strange relics of that august ceremonial.

It does not fall within the scope of these pages to describe the brilliant spectacle, long since inscribed upon the scroll of history, nor scarcely to refer to it as but gilding the sad turning-point in Napoleon's fortune. Oh sad mistake, in that usually far-sighted man—breaking the laws of God to promote his own political interests. Vain hope. It is the grandson of Josephine, not of Napoleon, who now sits upon the throne of France!

Mr. Wilder thus describes in short-hand some of the scenes, both gay and terrible, following Napoleon's wedding.

"The same day I had the honor of being present at, though not of partaking of the royal banquet given at the palace of the Tuileries by the emperor to several kings and queens; and again, a week after, at a fête given, according to the programme, to the emperor, the court, the foreign ambassadors, and their secretaries of legation, by Prince Carigan of Russia, followed the week after by a no less brilliant entertainment given by the Austrian ambassador the Prince of Swartzenberg, when that disastrous conflagration occurred which cost the life of his sister and four other princes, and some sixteen others. Between forty and fifty were wounded, among whom was the infirm Prince Carigan, notwithstanding his diamond epaulettes and splendor, who, in consequence of being trodden under foot in the rush of the crowd to escape the flames, was confined to his bed for three months. In witnessing this scene of commingled flame and blood and death, methought with the poet,

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"'Vain is the help of flesh and blood;
Their breath departs, their pomp and power,
And thoughts all vanish in an hour,
Nor can they make their promise good.'

"While on the subject of the above fêtes, I ought to state that the service of gold on the table, at which were seated the emperor, empress, kings, and queens at the banquet first named, was presented to the emperor by the city of Paris after his conquest of Prussia. It cost 2,000,000 francs. This splendid service the emperor took with him to St. Helena; and such was the short allowance of provision granted by the English government under the jailorship of Sir Hudson Lowe, that Napoleon was reduced to the absolute necessity of disposing of this gold service piece by piece, in order to put bread into his own mouth and those of his companions."

Mr. Wilder was witness not only of Napoleon's marriage, but of his triumphs after Austerlitz, the rejoicings upon the birth of the King of Rome, and many of the other magnificent celebrations, varied in cause and character, by which Napoleon so well understood how to occupy the excitable French populace.

And to scenes far different Mr. Wilder could also testify. In 1815, soon after landing at Havre, he wrote home to America:

"After arranging some commercial transactions at Havre, I proceeded to Paris, where I had before passed eight years of my life; but what a contrast! When I left it, all was gayety, luxury, and opulence; on my return, all was confusion and consternation. The great contending armies were then in sight of each other in Flanders and on the borders of the Rhine, and a tremendous crisis was ap-

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proaching. Not many days passed before our worst fears were realized by the return of Napoleon to his capital covered with the blood of the slain. The result of the battle was soon made known, and a horrible gloom was depicted on the countenance of every one. Thirty thousand French left dead on the field of battle had put every family in France again in mourning.

"While the fate of Napoleon was being decided in the Chamber of Peers and Representatives, news arrived that the allied armies were marching fast upon Paris, and great preparations were making for a vigorous defence; in the mean time the remnant of the French army was entering Paris, followed by hundreds of carriages of all descriptions filled with wounded soldiers. Oh, what heartrending scenes; to see wives inquiring in vain for their husbands, mothers learning the fate of their sons who had perished on the field of battle, and sisters bewailing the loss of their brothers.

"Add to this, hundreds of thousands of peasants were entering Paris from the adjacent country, having fled from their cottages with their little all, consisting perhaps of a cow, two or three sheep, a horse and cart with a little furniture, and nowhere to lodge but in the open street, even with young children. Many of these people were without the means of procuring sustenance even for one day, and all kinds of provisions had risen in price six times their value in consequence of the city of Paris preparing for a vigorous defence, which of course would occasion a

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long siege. But all this was only the beginning of troubles. The gates of the city were ordered to be shut, and no one allowed to pass the barriers; all warehouses and shops were shut, all business suspended, and every one endeavored to secure his own from impending danger. In the mean time the emperor, having abdicated, had fled to Rochport, with a view of embarking for America, and the main body of the remaining French army had stationed themselves on the heights in the environs of Paris.

"Things were in this situation when one morning, at break of day, the roaring of cannon from the neighboring hills announced the arrival of the allied armies, and the clouds of smoke we could perceive at a distance was a convincing proof that a partial engagement had commenced. Our apprehensions were soon confirmed by the arrival of hundreds of wagons and other carriages loaded with wounded soldiers, preceded by eleven hundred Prussians which the French had taken as prisoners in the engagement. This momentary success on the part of the French tended to check for a day or two the operations of Lord Wellington and Blucher. In the mean time I, with more curiosity than prudence, was induced, with thousands of Parisians, to visit the field of battle. But I will forbear to describe this scene of carnage and desolation. Suffice it to say, that there were upwards of two thousand slain. Ah, my heart sickens at the recollection of the horrors I there beheld.

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"On my return I was taken by a party of Imperial Guards for an Englishman; but being immediately recognized by one of the National Guards as an American, I escaped unhurt; and by the persuasion of my banker and some other friends, I returned home and remained in-doors during that and the following day. At length a message arrived from Wellington and Blucher that if the barriers were not opened in twenty-four hours to the allied armies, consisting of four hundred thousand men, the bombardment of the city should immediately commence, and Paris should be delivered to pillage for three days.

"Judge of my situation, with near two hundred thousand francs of goods on hand at the time I received this intelligence, without the possibility of sending a single case out of Paris. But while we were busily employed in stowing away the most valuable goods in cellars, caves, etc., news arrived that Paris had capitulated, and of course the general alarm subsided; but I never wish to experience such another day.

"Several days now passed in the evacuation of the French imperial troops and the entry into Paris of near half a million of the allied army, consisting of almost all nations, kindreds, and tongues, headed by Wellington and Blucher, and followed by Louis XVIII. and suite.

"At length the Emperor Alexander, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Austria arrived, preceded by Cossacks, and followed by a numerous

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retinue, consisting of almost all the princes of the North.

"It was at this time that I felt the weight of Blucher's contribution, besides having an English general and fifteen soldiers stationed at our hotel, where they remained until within a few days; however, as I have escaped pillage and kept my head on my shoulders during these scenes of confusion, devastation, and destruction, I ought not to complain, but have much reason to rejoice in the goodness of divine Providence for having thus been preserved. No one can ever be astonished at the French Revolution who witnessed their conduct during these rapid changes. On the very Boulevards, where the day before I saw three men cut to pieces on the spot for crying, '*Vive le Roi!*' the next day two more were killed near the same place for crying, '*Vive l'Empereur!*' In fact, I have seen the same persons one day cry, *Vive l'Empereur!* the next day cry, *Vive l'Empereur the Second!* or the young Napoleon, and the third day, *Vive le Roi!* and all with equal enthusiasm.

"I shall never pretend to give you half the particulars, as it would require volumes. I will, however, mention one circumstance which has recently taken place, and has caused much joy throughout Paris.

"You must know that since the return of the paternal king numerous arrests have taken place of generals and other persons who have served Bonaparte, among whom was Monsieur Lavalette, whose

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wife was confined the very day that he was condemned to death.

"On hearing the fatal news the next day, she left her bed and little babe and flew to the palace, and prostrated herself at the feet of the king; but neither her entreaties nor her delicate situation had any effect. She fainted, and was taken from his presence. She then addressed the allied sovereigns to intercede in behalf of her husband, but all in vain; and the day before yesterday was appointed for his execution.

"At five o'clock in the evening previous to the fatal day appointed, Madame Lavalette went to the prison where her husband was confined, in order to take the last and long farewell, when, profiting by a momentary absence of the guard and keeper, she dressed her husband in her own clothes in exchange for his, and by this means has providentially effected his escape, to the very great joy of every one except his persecutors. But the surprise and despair of the prison-keeper on discovering Madame Lavalette in place of her husband, is neither to be described nor imagined. A general search was made for him yesterday throughout Paris, but in vain; and it is thought that he is ere this out of the kingdom. Madame Lavalette is still detained in prison; but she is entitled to too much credit and praise ever to receive any injury for having thus extricated an innocent husband, and whose fond attachment for each other has ever been reciprocal.

"I have since been to Lyons, where, on the 8th

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of September, the merchants united and gave me a splendid dinner; after which I took a post-chaise with a French gentleman for Paris, a journey of near three hundred and fifty miles. About nine o'clock the same evening we were stopped by a highwayman; but on showing our pistols, the fellow made off, and I arrived in safety, without any other incidents except being obliged to have my passport viséd perhaps thirty times by the commissaires of the different nations whose troops were stationed in all the small cities and villages through which we passed. It was in those miserable villages that I saw the lamentable effect of war, with all its concomitant evils; where neither age nor sex were respected, and the poor inhabitants, with their farms devastated and exhausted, were still forced to maintain from six to twelve soldiers each, who insulted them with impunity, whenever not served agreeably to their desires. Ah, my heart recoils at the recollection of these horrors.

"Oh happy America! little do you appreciate the inestimable privileges you so peculiarly enjoy."

Yes, in 1815, America, having partially lost the fresh impression of her Revolution, and in 1812 having fought with England, in no small part at sea, knew little of war and of battle-fields such as during the past four years she has learned to dread through sad experience; but which, thanks to an overruling God, have borne such a noble harvest of surer peace, of universal freedom, worth all the expenditure upon them of treasure and of blood.

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At the time of the Emperor Napoleon's exile to the island of Elba, among other small means to which the Bourbon king resorted in order to stay up his tottering throne, Mr. Wilder sometimes related the following as touching his own experience. A stringent law was passed, that no picture, statue, statuette, figure, or resemblance of "General Bonaparte," as he was called, should be suffered to remain in any place, public or private, among any residents, native or foreign. Consequently there was a sudden disappearance of every thing of the kind, from the bronze statue on the top of the pillar made from cannon taken at Austerlitz, which statue Louis Philippe had the good sense and discretion to restore, to the mere toy or thimble-case bearing Napoleon's profile upon its outline. Every house was to be visited and examined, to see that the order was strictly obeyed, and all offending articles were to be seized.

Mr. Wilder, owning a particularly fine and correct bronze statuette of the emperor, buried it, with other things of the kind, in his cellar. His turn for inspection by the police came. Not Talleyrand even could have protected him here. In walked into his counting-room the officer, with his secretary and other attendants, who said in a pompous and semi-contemptuous tone, "Have you any statue, image, or likeness of any kind, of that man?" "Of what man?" said Mr. Wilder. "You know, sir, very well who is meant," said the officer impatiently; "that man—that usurper." "What man?

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what usurper?" said Mr. Wilder; "I am a stranger here." "Why do you keep me? You know who I mean; that usurper—that *Bonaparte*, if you *will* have it," said the officer. "Have you any likeness or representation of him?" "Certainly I have," said Mr. Wilder; and turning to a clerk, "Gougain, bring me a bag of Napoleons." Then pouring them out on the desk before him, "Here they are, sir." The police official stared. At first he could make no answer; but then said, "That money is not what I want. You can keep that." "Go and tell your master," said Mr. Wilder, "that the whole specie currency of the realm must be called in before he can keep from the eyes of the people the features of the Emperor Napoleon." "You are right," said the officer, now leaving, but continuing aside to his comrades, "It is ridiculous, truly, this business we are on; but the stupid Bourbons cannot see it." And thus closed the interview, conducted on the part of Mr. Wilder in a way so characteristic.

Deep in the universal French heart was engraved the great Napoleon. No removal or destruction of outward mementos could affect his position there. He, not only a man of the people, but the very embodiment of the best features of Gallic character, had burst through the long guarded precincts of royalty, and showed himself superior to their former occupants. It were indeed impossible to reside in France during the days of this great man, without sharing in the feelings of affectionate admiration and enthusiasm with which he almost

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magically inspired and fascinated all about him. But beyond this, from direct knowledge of his plans and policy learned from Latour Maubrey, as well as from public observation of them shared in by others, Mr. Wilder felt sincere respect for Napoleon Bonaparte. He noticed the religious freedom, the great improvements, social and political, brought about in France by this great ruler; marked the successful working of the "Code Napoleon," which, more or less modified, has since been adopted by every free nation in Europe; and felt that, on the whole, he had been raised up to be a blessing to the world.

These feelings led Mr. Wilder to take a deep interest in the final fate of the emperor, and induced him, through Latour Maubrey, to offer plans for his escape to this country. It will be remembered that Mr. Wilder, from the constant shipments he had long made here of French goods, possessed peculiar facilities for any thing of the kind. He was able to control the sailing of ships laden under his direction. He proposed that Napoleon, until reaching the coast, should disguise himself as the valet for whom he, Mr. Wilder, had already a passport. Then, on board an American ship, a hogshead or large cask would be prepared, in which Napoleon could be concealed until beyond the limit of danger. This cask was to have a false compartment towards the end, to be seen from the deck, from which water was constantly to drip. Arrived in America, Mr. Wilder further proposed to take the emperor to his own

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country residence in Bolton, Mass., there to remain incog. at least six months.

This scheme Napoleon seriously considered, and declared it feasible; but finally declined—to his honor, be it said—because he would not desert friends who had been faithful to him through prosperity and adversity. He wished Mr. Wilder to arrange for their flight also. Mr. Wilder said Napoleon's own safety was all he could, under Providence, venture to secure at that time; that but one vessel could be cleared without attracting observation. Bonaparte refused to leave his followers, and other plans for his changing places and passports for this country with his brother Joseph also falling through, he almost immediately surrendered himself to the officers of the Bellerophon, where his reception and subsequent treatment are known as a dark blot on that page of English history.

Of Talleyrand, notwithstanding his own personal indebtedness to him, Mr. Wilder obtained on the whole a sad impression, as appears in a memorandum made near the close of Mr. Wilder's life:

"Talleyrand, Prince of Benevento, crowned with all the earthly titles and honors which the sovereigns of Europe, his contemporaries, had the power to bestow, and wielding for fifty years an influence such as no other individual of the present century ever attained, and possessing a fortune of thirty millions of francs, or six millions of dollars, was led, at his approaching dissolution a few years ago, to pen the following declaration, which ought to

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demonstrate the folly and fallacy of imbibing an insatiable desire for accumulating great wealth, and aspiring to obtain the fading and unsatisfying honors which man bestows upon his fellow-man.

"A paper was found on his table near his bed, on the morning of the day previous to his death, on which he had written by the light of the lamp,

"'Behold eighty-three years passed away! What cares, what agitation, what anxieties, what ill-will, what sad complications! and all without other result except great fatigue of body and mind, and disgust with regard to the past, and a profound sentiment of discouragement and despair with regard to the future.'

"What an appalling commentary is this declaration, penned at the closing scene of life by one of the most extraordinary and distinguished men of the present century."

Reflecting on the history of Talleyrand and Napoleon, Mr. Wilder adds:

"As far as my observations go, confirmed by an experience of eighty-three years, the great proportion of mankind seem to be actuated by the most selfish motives, exhausting the energies of both body and mind in the accumulation of wealth, in grasping at and wielding visionary power, in illusory attempts to obtain earthly distinction and glory, and in aspiring to the evanescent honors of this world. To accomplish this vain achievement, what unjustifiable measures have been resorted to, what plodding schemes devised, what awakened

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guilty consciences stifled, what energies misdirected, what conflicting emotions lulled into a state of apathetic oblivion, what obsequiousness displayed, what sympathies suppressed, what virtue betrayed, and in short, what hopes of future joys jeoparded and for ever annihilated! From the top to the bottom of the ladder of renown, what a weary, selfish, rapacious, impatient crowd has ever presented itself, with the exception of here and there a noble specimen of disinterested benevolence.

"Among the millions who have yielded to the uncompromising 'king of terrors,' how vain has been their time-long struggle for distinction after death. How few among the number have reached the mouldering pages of history, or the brief immortality of canvas, bronze, or marble! If great nations of old lie prone in the dust, with all their proud names forgotten, or have left us but a dubious hieroglyph on some unmouldered brick or column whereby to eke out their thousand years of empire or renown, what hope for us single mortals trailing out our little destinies!

"It is but fifty-five short years ago that I saw one, then at the apex of earthly power and human glory, returning from his victory at Austerlitz, surrounded by the followers of his fortune and the sharers of his renown, and preceded by Heralds at Arms decorated with purple and gold, and exclaiming, 'Immortal honors to the grand Napoleon!' as he entered his capital in triumph to receive the plaudits of a vast and admiring people; while hun-

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dreds of thousands of the enthusiastic citizens of the metropolis, were taking the carpets from their saloons, and spreading them on the Boulevards, accompanied by hundreds of young ladies strewing flowers thereon for the conqueror's horse to prance over during this evanescent ovation—and now, not one, not one who held any distinguished place in that memorable transaction lives! The conqueror and his mighty men lie low in the dust, their names and heroic deeds already almost forgotten, and they gone to the retributions of eternity!

"Let us discard all desire for earthly distinctions or aggrandizement which has for its object ostentatious display. Be it our highest and holiest aspiration, while in the faithful discharge of every incumbent duty, to seek, through the all-powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is 'the way, the truth, and the life,' and on whose blood and righteousness and atoning sacrifice *alone* we must rely to secure 'an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens.' May we then, amid its effulgent glories, be permitted to participate with 'the just made perfect,' with all the triumphant redeemed throng, in for ever celebrating together the praises of redeeming love."

With Louis Napoleon, "the nephew of his uncle," Mr. Wilder had several prolonged interviews during his stay in New York in 1833, after the affair at Strasburg, when he was banished from France by Louis Philippe.

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Louis Napoleon, at this time, put up at the Washington House in Broadway near the City Hall, located where one of Stewart's stores now stands; near also to Mr. Wilder's then residence in Chambers-street. In passing the Washington House, Mr. Wilder saw with Louis Napoleon a man against whom he thought it a duty to put the young man on his guard. It was a man who, by false representations of the value of lands in St. Lawrence county, N. Y., had largely defrauded the Necker and De Staël families, with whom the Duc de Broglie was connected by marriage. This will again be referred to as a link in another "string of providences" which Mr. Wilder delighted in tracing out. Knowing that the sharper in question had two more townships of land, covered with hard-hacks and scrub-oaks, with which he had so egregiously cheated his friends in Paris, Mr. Wilder took the liberty of calling on Napoleon, who received him cordially after understanding the especial purport of the visit, and with many thanks to Mr. Wilder, said he had really been much annoyed by the man in question, but was not prepared to make any investment in lands, nor inclined to any movement until he could hear from his invalid mother, who was very ill at the time he was compelled to leave her. In fact, if the next news should not prove more favorable, he should return to his mother at all hazards, with or without the permission of Louis Philippe. Mr. Wilder said that the young man's filial attachment to his dying mother did much to enhance his estimate of one whom he little supposed would ever become emperor of the French.

When Louis Napoleon learned incidentally from one of his attendants that Mr. Wilder was present at the marriage of his uncle, he kept him long after the dinner they took together, until late in the evening, asking many questions regarding that and other events in Paris of which Mr. Wilder had been an eye-witness. He also returned the visit, and had several conversations with Mr. Wilder, whose recollections of his uncle seemed much to interest him. Mr. Wilder said of Louis Napoleon, that during his residence in New York, he certainly evinced a greater degree of common-sense than the world seemed disposed to accord to him at that time.

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Amid the hazards of crossing the ocean in our war of 1812 with England, Mr. Wilder was the bearer of despatches from France, and witnessed the contrast between monarchical display and our republican institutions. Neither telegraphs nor locomotives, "seeming like torches, running like lightnings," as described by the prophet Nahum, had then been invented. Tidings for the government, upon the then more infrequent arrival of vessels from abroad, often met with serious delay.

The vessel in which Mr. Wilder came from Europe about that time was anxiously expected by President Madison, and the then acting Secretary of War, James Monroe. Relays of horses were by order provided to bring on the bearer of despatches as quickly as possible. Mr. Wilder had the honor of that office, and was accredited also as bringing to our government the latest confidential advices verbally.

Travelling night and day, he arrived in Washington at 11 o'clock P. M., drove directly to the house of the Secretary of War, rang the bell; the door was opened by a servant with as little form as in a private house. Mr. Monroe appeared immediately, and said, "We have been expecting you; we must go without further delay to the President." Arrived there, they rang the bell. An old man came to the door with a nightcap on, holding a common candle in his hand. It was the President of the United States. "Never," said Mr. Wilder, "was I more surprised. I had come fresh from a sight of all the

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form and etiquette that guarded all approach to the person of a European sovereign. Here was a ruler, wielding more actual power than some of them, receiving me with more than Spartan simplicity."

With Andrew Jackson, while President, Mr. Wilder had at least one interview, clearly distinctive of the peculiar traits of both men, and also of importance, as probably the means of preserving peace between France and this country. Mr. Wilder ever felt with a grateful heart that this interview had secured the payment of a large sum due to us from France. The circumstances leading to it are related in part in Mr. Wilder's own language:

"To illustrate the controlling power of God in making use of human agency in the accomplishment of his wise designs, it is necessary that I should go back to the times of the French Revolution, when that illustrious financier and far-famed banker to Louis XVI., Mr. Necker, was in power. He was the father of the celebrated Madame de Staël, and the highly favored grandfather of the Baron de Staël, and of his sister the Duchess de Broglie, the memory of which pious and estimable lady is published in connection with that of Madame Rumpff, the daughter of John Jacob Astor.

"It seems that Mr. Necker, during the revolutionary struggle, was desirous of placing some of his ample fortune in a foreign country, as a place of safer deposit than France or Switzerland. At that period Necker had the misfortune to be introduced to a man who had just returned from America, where he had been speculating in wild lands. This unprincipled man gave such glowing accounts of the quality, location, and cheapness of these lands, that Mr. Necker became the purchaser of two townships, consisting of near fifty thousand acres, at two dollars an acre, besides lands in the towns of Clare and Clifton in St. Lawrence county, New York; and after a while his daughter, Madame de Staël,

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relying on the integrity of this man, purchased an additional quantity of thirty thousand acres, which, it seems, she and her children had been trying to dispose of, in order to save them from being eaten up by tax and interest.

"I had become, from their connection with the Paris religious societies, at first in the Moral Christian Society, in which Protestants and Catholics united, quite intimate with the two brothers, the Baron de Staël and the Duc de Broglie. On the eve of my departure for America, the latter called, being recommended to do so by the Baron Hottingeur. He urged me to become his agent in disposing of the aforesaid lands. Such were his engagements in affairs of state, that he could not give time and attention to this unfortunate investment. Our relations had been such that I could not well refuse this request, though reluctantly yielding assent to it; but never thinking that the matter would be overruled to prevent the occurrence of a disastrous war. I was furnished with all the papers and documents necessary, and by employing the son-in-law of Mr. Depeau, a descendant of the Count de Grasse, who resided in St. Lawrence county, we succeeded at length in obtaining the miserable price of twenty cents an acre, which was forthwith remitted to the Duc de Broglie.

"Seeing the enormous loss to which the De Staël family had been subjected, I made no charges. All my services were gratuitous. Letters were received by me from the Duc de Broglie and his brother-in-law full of grateful acknowledgments. A small remuneration had been obtained by them, and a stop put to further ruinous taxes.

"In the meantime Gen. Jackson became the President of the United States. In his first Message to Congress, he came out with a threat against France, if she did not pay the twenty-five million francs which she had promised to do at a late settlement between the two nations.

"On the following October I received a confidential letter from the secretary of the Duc de Broglie, suggested by Rev. Dr. Baird, saying that, however great the desire of the duke as Prime-minister of France to pay the twenty-five millions, yet were he to do it under the aforesaid threat, it would create a revolution in France. He therefore requested me to go to

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Washington—and this was backed by an urgent request from my venerated friend Baron Hottingeur—and have recourse to all the influence that could be put in requisition to obtain if possible an apology from the President, in the ensuing message, for the offending threat, or at least a softened expression, so as to allow the duke, in accordance with his desire, to pay over the money.

"Knowing the unyielding character of the man with whom I had to do, I was by no means sanguine of accomplishing the difficult task entrusted to my management. Encouraged, however, by the declaration of St. Paul, 'I can do all things through Christ strengthening me,' I proceeded on my way to Washington. Having previously some acquaintance with the Presbyterian minister there, I called on him to accompany me to the White House and present me to the President."

Mr. Wilder found the President at home, and was soon able to secure a private interview; when the first remark he made was, "Sir, you see before you a man who desires no office, no emolument from government." The stiff attitude and settled features of the President very visibly relaxed, and with a more easy manner he asked Mr. Wilder to proceed, which he did, explaining the whole matter as has been stated. As the word apology was spoken, the President became excited, rose to his feet, exclaimed, "No, sir, Andrew Jackson never will," bringing his fist down on the table with a heavy blow—"Andrew Jackson never will make an apology for what he has said in his Message." Mr. Wilder began to tremble for the success of his mission, but waiting a moment, renewed his statement of facts, concluding with an appeal to President Jackson's feelings, made in his own inimitable style and manner.

"If by one turn of your pen, merely softening an expression, you, sir, avert from this land and from France all the horrors of a bloody conflict, generations yet unborn will bless your name. Think, sir, of all the widows and the orphans such a war would create. Prevent it, and your own approving conscience before God and before men shall be your reward. You, sir, are, in the providence of God, occupying

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a station which, if you should find grace to discharge with fidelity its responsible duties, will produce results of vast importance to the present, future, and eternal good of our fellow-men—results which angels will view with joy and admiration. Should you, by the mere softening of an expression, be now led in the ways that make for peace, eternity alone will disclose all the beneficial effects of it amid the splendors of celestial glory. That you, sir, may have grace to do this, God grant for the Redeemer's sake."

The President was evidently much affected, and answered, "Sir, it shall be as you wish; the message shall be made satisfactory. What would you propose?"

Prepared for such an emergency, Mr. Wilder took from his pocket a paper on which was written a short sentence relative to our affairs with France, and handing it to the President, said, "Something to this purport, I am sure, would enable the Duke de Broglie to pay the money without difficulty." Suffice it to say, the suggestion was adopted, the sentence virtually inserted in the next message; France was satisfied, and her debt to us soon cancelled.

But how do all the scenes and interviews that have been above depicted pale, both in grandeur and importance, in comparison to those to which he, who saw so much of the pomp and glory of this world, has now been introduced. And to these "nobler scenes above" the humblest believer may have access. Even now is he one of the sons of God, being directed by the great Ruler of the universe to call him Father.

Did Christians on earth practically realize their true position, raised far above "the estate in which they were created," how little would they be dazzled by the false glare of mere temporal fame and grandeur. Their thoughts and aspirations, like those of

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Mr. Wilder, would not be satisfied with aught below the skies. We have traced his way among some of the great ones of the earth, both in France and in this country, and have heard his own report of the incomparably greater happiness to be found in the strait and narrow path that leads to life eternal. Patience then, Christian, though poor and despised, or weary of sin and toil. Soon shalt thou stand before the King of kings, not as a guest or witness, however honored, but thyself one of the royal family, never more to be exiled from his glorious court.

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XI.

When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell. Acts 18: 20, 21.

THE time of parting came, of final parting with Europe, with its scenes of royal grandeur, its associations with the past, its charities of the present. In 1823 Mr. Wilder felt it to be his duty to return to his native country. "Various circumstances and considerations, among others the unsettled condition of affairs in Europe," decided him to do this. The following—can it be called a *business* letter?—was written to one of his partners in New York a little before this time:

"PARIS, August 15, 1822.

"MY DEAR BROTHER IN OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST—Your much valued favor of June 10th has duly reached me, and I rejoice at all the Lord is doing among those candidates for eternity who dwell in your city. May the good work go on and prosper until all, even from the least to the greatest, shall, by the all-powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, be brought to the foot of the cross, and be made willing to know nothing save *Jesus Christ* and him crucified. If the prayers which I have offered from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year will prevail, our dear friend —— and

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his interesting family will ere long be among that happy number. A few years, perhaps months, and time for him, you, and me will be for ever at an end. We shall enter on eternity. And if our association in this world only results in having amassed a little of its dust, we are certainly to be pitied. Let us be fervent in prayer at the throne of grace, that our friend and partner may be brought to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and that our own faith may be confirmed in this dear Redeemer; that we may at length be enabled, through his blood and righteousness, to participate with the just made perfect during the endless ages of eternity.

"On the 11th of July I replied to your letter of the 30th of May, approving of your decision to bring our partnership to a close on the first of April next; but I must confess I have some doubts as to the indications of Providence with regard to my future movements. I certainly wish to pursue the path of duty, and by no means to plant myself at home for the sake of being what the world calls at my ease.

"Attached as I am to all the committees of the various religious institutions which I have perhaps been a feeble instrument under Providence of forming in this place, I am aware I ought to decide with caution how I abandon these infant societies, until they shall have become more firmly established; but God can work with means or without means, or can raise up others more zealous and better qualified than myself to promote his cause in this part of his vineyard.

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"I only wish to know the indications of Providence, and I am then willing to remain, or ready to return. I desire to be placed in that situation in life where I can best promote the honor and glory of God, most advance the glorious cause of Christ, and best contribute to the temporal welfare of our human race, and the spiritual good of immortal souls.

"I agree with you that, through the goodness of our heavenly Benefactor, we have the first establishment in our line both in America and here; and I believe I may say, we combine more advantages than any other house.... Some of these it has taken twenty years to obtain.

"S. V. S. WILDER."

When it became known that Mr. Wilder was to leave, expressions of regret came pouring in from various friends all over Europe. "Who," they said, "could take his place?" Meetings of the various societies were held, at which were passed resolutions testifying respect and affection, also sorrow at the prospective loss of this their earliest friend, who had sheltered their infancy, and without whom, even then, they almost feared to go alone. Medals were ordered to be presented to him. Of all the societies he was appointed an honorary member, and to all of them he remained in fact for years a regular contributor, receiving the annual reports of their work ever "with many feelings of grateful emotion."

The following, from an address made by Mr.

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Wilder at the last meeting he attended of the Paris Missionary Society, may serve as a type of others made by him on similar occasions about that time.

"By thus departing, I sensibly feel that I shall be deprived the privilege of personally uniting my feeble exertions with those who have become endeared to me by the ties of friendship and affection, and with whom I have been accustomed to meet on various committees for the promotion of the cause of Christ and the welfare of immortal souls. I trust, however, I shall always be united with you in heart and in my prayers.

"I praise God for enabling me to witness the formation and establishment of this pious institution in Paris; and if your Committee are actuated by a love to the Saviour, a desire to promote his glorious cause, and are not influenced in your labors and deliberations by motives of human consideration, and are faithful in the discharge of your sacred and important duties, the eyes of the Christian world will be fixed on you with gratitude to God; thousands of prayers will be offered at the throne of grace in your behalf; angels will contemplate with joy and admiration your labors of love; generations yet unborn will elevate songs of praise to God our Saviour for the blessings you will have been instrumental in procuring to perishing millions; and you yourselves, when you are ripe for glory, will be admitted, through the blessed mediation and merits of a crucified Redeemer, to the happy regions of endless felicity."

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To the gentlemen of the "Society of Christian Morals," upon receipt of a beautiful medal which had been forwarded to him, Mr. Wilder wrote:

"Though deprived at present of a participation in your labors of love, yet be assured, dear colleagues, of my best wishes and most fervent prayers for your success. Already has the 'Society of Christian Morals' exerted a most benign influence in your own metropolis and kingdom. But that influence, not confined to your own country, has been felt even in this western hemisphere. The articles in your publications relative to slavery have been read here with no common interest. We recognize in them auspicious tokens of African emancipation. The 'jubilee' of that unhappy country is, we trust, not far distant—when her captive sons shall shake off the fetters of a cruel bondage, and breathe the air of freedom. The influence of the blessed gospel is hastening this consummation.

"There are not wanting in our own country men who, appreciating the high national privileges they enjoy, look with shame on the foul blot which mars this land of freemen. Could it, consistently with the safety of our citizens and the well-being of the slaves, be at once obliterated, such a note of joy would be struck as was never before heard in America.

"There is a day coming, and your Society is one proof of it, when the commissioned angel shall take his flight, and the everlasting gospel be universally diffused. The Saviour whom we acknow-

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ledge predicted that, when 'lifted up' on the cross, he would 'draw all men unto him.' Do we not already see the breaking twilight of a millennial morn? Are not the evangelical institutions of the present day propitious tokens of its coming? Oh, dear sirs, what a privilege do *we* enjoy in being permitted to bear a subordinate part in its advancement! Talk we of honor? What honor can be compared with that of being associated with the great God in an enterprise so elevating, so benevolent, so holy? Search we for happiness? What pleasure so refined as that which accompanies and follows our efforts to benefit our fellow-men? Go on, then, my dear colleagues; diffuse the precepts of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ; for it is 'profitable for the life that now is, and for that which is to come.'"

In June, 1823, Mr. Wilder and family took a final leave of Paris, sailing in the Stephanie, Capt. Macy. That era of his life was ended. The waves of the Atlantic, though of late years never suffered long to repose between the frequent passing of our modern steamers, ever after separated him from Europe, though never from its memories. These were often refreshed by reports made to him by friends visiting that continent, or by occasional intercourse by person or letter with those there left behind.

In 1846, a friend and son-in-law wrote to Mr. Wilder, "Mr. Monod thinks that it would be exceedingly gratifying to you to witness the change here, looking back to the time when the little band of Christians met at your house, and now witness-

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ing their large worshipping assemblies. I attended service at the Oratoire last Sabbath, where the house was filled with an attentive and highly respectable looking congregation. In France the prospect is brightening. They now number five hundred Protestant ministers, one half of whom are considered evangelical."

In 1857, the Rev. Frederic Monod visited this country to obtain aid in building a church on the Boulevard Sebastopol. Upon his arrival here he soon addressed a note to Mr. Wilder, a part of which is introduced to show the feelings with which he was still regarded by at least one early Paris friend.

"My very dear Christian Friend—Years have rolled us on in life since I saw you or have heard from you. But never have I forgotten you nor dear Mrs. Wilder, and our Christian intercourse in Paris, nor our joint labors and prayers at a time when the light of the gospel had just begun to dawn in France. I have immediately inquired for you, am highly impatient to shake hands with you again, and talk over with you a little old and ever-cherished Parisian times. With kindest remembrance of Mrs. Wilder, believe me, my very dear Christian friend, ever yours most affectionately in Christ,

"FREDERIC MONOD."

And these old times the friends were permitted to talk over at Mr. Wilder's home, at that time in Elizabeth, N. J.

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In May, 1865, Rev. Wm. C. Roberts, the young pastor whose advent in aid of the beloved Dr. Magie Mr. Wilder had hailed with much satisfaction, was called to Europe, in part as delegate to some of the European societies which have been mentioned. But he carried them no greeting from him who in days of yore took such interest in every detail of their work. The lips were sealed which would otherwise have laden him with messages of love and encouragement. And are any on those eastern shores now left who will care to hear from the young pastor, privileged to witness Mr. Wilder's dying experience, that he their early associate and friend, at a good old age, had finished his course with joy, and had no doubt, through grace, passed into that heaven which for years had been so constantly his theme of rejoicing and meditation, where he hoped to meet all who on earth had been "united to him by the ties of nature, friendship, and affection," if also at the same time united to Christ his Lord by the still closer bonds of true indwelling faith and hope and love.*

* Rev. Mr. Roberts, in a letter from Europe, says, "I was invited to breakfast with the Executive Committee of the Religious Tract Society, London, the day after receiving the 'American Messenger,' containing a brief sketch of Mr. Wilder. I read it as part of my speech on that occasion. They were much interested in it, and asked for the paper. Dr. Davis, and others who had some knowledge of Mr. Wilder, asked me many questions about his labors and remarkable death. They seemed to be delighted with my account of him. His family should feel that his memory and good name are an unspeakable legacy.'

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"One generation passeth away, another cometh." Let each do its part. There is still work to be done in the Master's vineyard. Let all emulate the example of the pioneers in benevolent action, as one after another they are called to nobler work and praise above; nor let the ground already, by God's blessing, reclaimed from sin and Satan, through neglect, be finally lost to the Redeemer's kingdom.

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XII.

This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. John 6 : 29.

BOLTON, beautiful Bolton Hill, in many memories, what associations cluster about this Mr. Wilder's pleasant Massachusetts home. Here in fact was brought out an Americanized edition of his Paris life, modified also as it necessarily was by country, instead of city surroundings; but an enlarged Christian hospitality was still an essential feature of its daily routine.

During Mr. Wilder's last absence in France of six years, he had given free use of this house and of all its appurtenances to a Boston mercantile friend who had been unfortunate in business. Upon Mr. Wilder's return in 1823, immediately previous to which this gentleman and his family vacated the premises, he was grieved, even shocked, to find in his parlor a book and pamphlets erroneous according to his view of Bible truth, and, as he felt, consequently mischievous in tendency. Mr. Wilder's mind was now greatly enlightened by means of influences already specified, and he was sensitive to any thing touching the honor of his Redeemer. The Socinian book found in his own house was but an index of the general falling away among the churches in that part of Massachusetts in a direc-

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tion to which perhaps persons of mental cultivation are especially liable. What they cannot comprehend they set aside. Such a chill had passed over that region. Mr. Wilder, coming from the atmosphere of Christian love by which he had been immediately surrounded in Europe, was struck to the heart—not through the heart; no, that beat strong and warm in the hope of doing something, as Providence might open the way, to vindicate his Saviour's cause, showing him forth to all as on the throne of the universe, "God over all, blessed for ever."

Before Mr. Wilder had become fully aware of the sad extent to which Christ had been taken out of Christianity by some professedly Christian leaders, how "works" were by them substituted for, rather than added to "faith," he kept up friendly social intercourse with the neighboring clergy, noticing first omission of truth, rather than promulgation of error. There was among them, as he soon observed, a looseness in the universal commendation pronounced at funerals, a liberality certainly bordering on recklessness, when even a man about to be placed in a drunkard's grave, one who had long abused his family, was spoken of as—with perhaps a few exceptions, to which all mortals are liable—a good citizen, a kind husband, father, and friend, and who always paid his minister's tax cheerfully.

Even at a distance Mr. Wilder had managed his farm in detail, as written agreements, directions,

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account-books, and lists of stock and farm implements, found among his papers, testify; and now, with the help of his good neighbor and agent Capt. Caleb Moore, whose faithful discharge of duty was gratefully acknowledged, he busied himself more directly with the care of his farm, draining the lowlands, building dams, forming an extensive fish-pond, and enclosing several acres about it for a poultry-yard on so large a scale, that after a time flocks of domesticated wild-geese would fly from it for miles about the country.

Fruit-trees and grape-vines from the gardens of Versailles had been sent out by Mr. Wilder at various intervals, and were now coming into bearing, and needed care and pruning. Apple-orchards were beginning to furnish from sixty to seventy barrels of fruit for winter use. Additions and alterations were made to the house itself, and ornamental trees were planted about it. All this fully occupied the time of the quondam merchant, who thought himself finally retired from business.

Such changes could not fail to attract attention in a country neighborhood nearly half a century ago. Reports of strange French furniture and other adornments, extending even to Mr. Wilder's having a French wife—more excusable this, as the French language was then constantly spoken in his family—rapidly spread. Opportunities were desired that curiosity might be gratified.

It was soon whispered that Mr. Wilder had invited his farm-hands and their families to be pres-

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ent at family prayers in his library on Sunday afternoons. Some of the neighbors asked to be allowed to come in also. This opened the door for others to do the same, who, though coming at first to gratify curiosity, continued to attend from a more worthy motive. These Sabbath afternoon meetings grew into a fixed fact. Mr. Wilder lengthened and varied the services, sometimes himself expounding the word of God, and again often asking ministerial guests to give a short sermon. The leaven of truth was thus hid in many a humble heart, which at a later day became more fully revealed. Other influences were also at work in the neighborhood, preparing the ground that had long lain fallow for the seed of divine truth ere long to be planted there.

Sombre indeed, in a spiritual point of view, was the region, so beautiful in outward aspect, in which Mr. Wilder's present home was situated. "In vain with lavish kindness the gifts of God were strewn" richly about the vicinity. In vain, so far as many were concerned, did that remarkable semicircle of distant mountain outline to be seen from Bolton Hill, embracing as it did the nearer Wachusett and the far-off New Hampshire Monadnock, trace upon the evening sky a most graceful idea of the power and glory of the Lord Christ, "the Word" of God, "by whom all things were made." Happy the day, which soon came, when a living church of the Triune God was set like a mirror, even a burning glass, upon that hillside, to send the rays of the alone true Light of the world through the length and breadth

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of that beautiful valley of the Nashua, the reflection of which reached indeed throughout the country all around.

There are many who remember the Marquis de Lafayette's visit to the United States in 1824, where he was hailed rather by the title of "General," bringing him nearer to the American heart, as reminding it of his military and friendly connection with the revered Washington.

The most striking event perhaps in Mr. Wilder's life about this time was his reception under his own roof at Bolton of this distinguished stranger; to him not a stranger, as he had visited him at his home, La Grange, near Paris.

In order that the vast crowds collecting from place to place to greet Gen. Lafayette should not be disappointed, it was necessary that all the arrangements respecting his triumphal journey should be definite, and promptly carried out. Hon. Josiah Quincy, then Mayor of Boston, wrote to Mr. Wilder August 27, 1824, giving the programme for Massachusetts, and in reference to Mr. Wilder's part in carrying it out, closed by saying, "Mr. Wilder, *you have promised*, and I hold you responsible for it." On the same day Mr. Wilder wrote thus to the committee of arrangements in Worcester:

"Boston, Aug. 27, 1824.

"Gentlemen—I hasten to enclose to you a copy of a letter just addressed to me by the Hon. Josiah Quincy, by which you will see that Gen. Lafayette

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will breakfast at Worcester on Friday morning, the 3d of September, and that I have pledged myself that he shall reach within ten miles of Hartford on Friday eve.

"The general and his suite will be conducted from Boston in the city carriage to Concord; from whence I shall have the honor to conduct him to my house on Thursday eve; and from thence, on Friday morning, to Worcester, where, I trust, you will make the necessary arrangements for his reception, and have carriages and relays of horses prepared to conduct him in ample season on Friday to within ten miles of Hartford, so that he can make his entry early the next morning into that city.

"I have communicated this arrangement to Gen. Gregory, and there is no doubt but proper measures will be taken to form a military escort through our county.

"Respectfully, I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your most obedient, humble servant,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

The above arrangements were well carried out. The general arrived at Bolton at the hour expected. Mr. Wilder's house and grounds were a realization of fairy land. An arch had been thrown over the front gate, on which was clearly inscribed, "The sword of Jehovah, of Washington, and of Lafayette." The whole house was illuminated, a light shining from every pane. Lanterns among the evergreens and other trees added to the general effect. A

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supper was in readiness, of which the general, his suite, and other guests partook, after he had passed some little time with Mr. Wilder's family. The Lafayette Guards, a militia company of the place, taking that name for the occasion and retaining it in future, encamped all night about the premises.

"The general and suite retired to rest at half-past eleven o'clock; and after an early breakfast, he gave audience to a large concourse of citizens, who were eagerly waiting to take him by the hand. He then reviewed his guards and the companies of cavalry who were stationed in front of the house, and entered his carriage, preceded by the cavalry, and amid the acclamations of the citizens and the salute of his guards, and followed by his suite, the committee of arrangements, the general officers and their staff, and a numerous cavalcade of citizens; and thus proceeded on his way through Lancaster, Sterling, and West Boylston to Worcester, accompanied by the prayers and benedictions of thousands, who received him here with joy and admiration, and who hoped hereafter to hail him with delight in the happy regions of endless felicity."

It seems from a letter of Mr. Wilder, that Gen. Lafayette wished to see the newspaper accounts of his journey; and the letter also shows how, even to great men, Mr. Wilder was ready to speak of their eternal interests.

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"NEW YORK, Sept. 25, 1824.

"MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS—I have endeavored in vain to procure in this city a file of Boston papers giving a detail of your passage through the county of Worcester. It seems these papers have been much sought within a few days to send to Europe; but I have sent to Boston for three files, and I hope they will reach you previous to your leaving Philadelphia.

"May your valuable life, sir, long be preserved, a precious blessing to yourself, to your children, and to mankind, and at length may you be admitted, through the atoning sacrifice of a crucified Redeemer, to that happy country whose law is peace, whose King is love, and whose duration is eternity.

"Respectfully I have the honor to be yours,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

Pageants and processions of various kinds are now of such frequent occurrence in this country, that we cannot perhaps appreciate the excitement everywhere felt on the occasion of this progress of Lafayette. Mr. Wilder wrote concerning it to his friend Baron de Staël, and received the answer subjoined.

"BOSTON, August 28, 1824.

"MON CHER MONSIEUR LE BARON—We are all in transports of joy and admiration in the United States at the sight of the revered and beloved Lafayette. I wish you could have accompanied him

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to witness the reception which he receives from ten millions of freemen. I send you a few newspapers, which give but a feeble idea of what is passing here, and remain, in great haste,

"Yours sincerely,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

"PARIS, Nov. 7, 1824.

"MOST DEAR SIR—A thousand thanks for the file of American papers which you sent me. I read them with tears in my eyes, and do n't know a finer specimen of modern eloquence than the mayor of Boston's speech to our excellent friend Lafayette. How disgusting our old world cant appears when compared with this simple and graphic expression of the feelings of a free people. If Providence allows you to get rid of slavery and its attendant evils, you will be the first nation in the world. I have seen with pleasure that Lafayette has been appointed Vice-president of the American Bible Society, and am particularly desirous to know whether it be merely a testimony of respectful regard, or if it proceeds from any special interest that he has shown for the religious object of the Society.

"Believe me most faithfully yours,

"A. STAËL."

"P. S. May we entertain a hope of your returning to Paris?"

It is well known that Gen. Lafayette was much pleased with his reception in this country. A no-

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tice of Mr. Wilder's death in the New York Observer says, "His country residence was in Bolton, Mass., in 1824, when Lafayette made his celebrated visit to this country, and the friend of Washington was entertained by him at his own house in a style and manner that led the celebrated Frenchman to pronounce Mr. Wilder the most accomplished gentleman he had met in America."

In 1827, when Dr. Jonas King visited this his native land, he brought the following letter from Lafayette to Mr. Wilder.

"La Grange, May 20, 1827.

"My dear Sir—I am happy in the opportunity to offer myself to your kind remembrance, at the same time that I have to congratulate you on the pleasure you will find in the return of a long absent friend. The excellent Mr. King is now with us. His first visit in America will be to you, and I wish it was in my power to accompany him. The affectionate welcome I enjoyed at your beautiful seat will ever be present to my memory. Be pleased to remember me most gratefully, most cordially to Mrs. Wilder, to your amiable niece and children, to the friends who joined us at your hospitable house.

"Here I am surrounded by a numerous family, living on the recollection of my happy visit through the United States, chiefly employed in agricultural pursuits, but still harboring the hope that before my eyes are closed, they will see the sun of liberty light upon this western and southern part of the

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European continent. Old as I am, there may be some presumption in the fond anticipation. On this very anniversary day, fifty years are elapsed since I was indebted to the gallantry and firmness of two thousand officers and men for their *timely and handsome retreat*—so the commander-in-chief was pleased to express it—as they happened to be surrounded at Barren Hill, Pa., by the whole British army. But on this side of the Atlantic the cause of freedom is hurried on by a powerful auxiliary—I mean the imprudent, encroaching, and intolerable conduct of the adversaries to religious, civil, and political rights.

"Our excellent friend Mr. King has much to say to you respecting Asia, Greece, and this part of Europe; but I know he will hear inquiries and readily give answers relative to the colony of La Grange. He has been also intimately acquainted with the Broglie and Staël family. We had much conversation together. I shall therefore only offer the respectful regards of my son, my other children and grandchildren, and those of

"Your affectionate friend,

"LAFAYETTE."

While in such intercourse and in scenes such as above described, it must be confessed Mr. Wilder was in his element, it is still true that, as a citizen or politician, he never put himself forward; perhaps not enough so. But he always took pains to vote at the regular elections, even at much inconven-

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ience. It is now the growing conviction of good Christian men generally, that duty to God implies duty to their country and a conscientious interest in national affairs. They feel that office should not be avoided or declined because a line of disreputable incumbents may have rendered such posts undesirable. But Mr. Wilder ever kept aloof from political meetings and excitements, declining a nomination offered as Governor of Massachusetts; also as member of Congress. Improvements for public benefit always obtained his attention. He often used to say he "never desired but one office, and that was given him; but that he was turned out of it at the end of the year." It was the office of highway surveyor. He took it during his early stay at Bolton, upon condition that the town should expend upon the roads as much money as he would do himself. During his term, he built a causeway that was greatly needed; but although half the cost of it was defrayed by himself, the town were afraid to trust him further. Unofficially, however, by recourse to a simple expedient, he did much to improve the roads in his neighborhood. It was by having the wheels of his heavy farm-wagons made about six or seven inches wide. These wheels, instead of cutting up the spring roads, tended to consolidate and smooth them, besides rendering the drawing of heavy loads over soft ground easier for the oxen. This plan was not original with Mr. Wilder. It was one of the many benefits conferred by the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte upon France;

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one by which he brought about a great change for the better in its highways.

The following testimonial from Dr. Waterbury, of gratitude for hospitality long before enjoyed, may be a fitting close to the above sketch of Mr. Wilder's early Bolton life, which comparatively quiet life, in 1826, was, in the good providence of God, suddenly interrupted by his removal for eighteen months, with his family, to Ware Village, situated still further in the heart of Massachusetts.

"BROOKLYN, May, 1865.

"My first acquaintance with Mr. Wilder commenced in 1826, shortly after he had established himself in his beautiful residence at Bolton. We met at Worcester in furtherance of the Bible cause. In my youthful zeal I had worn myself almost to a shadow, and seeing my physical depression, he laid his hand upon my shoulder, and said, 'My young friend, you must go home with me, and Mrs. Wilder will nurse you until you gain the requisite strength to pursue this good work. My dear sir, you must have *rest*.' Such was his kind address, and I could not decline his hospitable invitation.

"The ride from Worcester to Bolton, as every one acquainted with it knows, can hardly be surpassed in rural beauty, and it being then midsummer, the deep verdure and balmy air rendered it grateful and exhilarating. That pleasant twilight ride I shall never forget. Arrived at the mansion, I was introduced to one of the sweetest home circles

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I had ever seen. I was provided with a fine saddle horse, and explored all the pleasant roads for miles around. Christian neighbors were invited to meet me, and prayer-meetings were held in the saloon. The whole air and atmosphere of that mansion was truly Christian. All the churches around had lapsed into Unitarianism, so that Mr. Wilder and family were constrained to establish the 'worship of Christ as God' in their own domicil. Here He was honored by a Sabbath-day service, to which all the neighbors in sympathy were invited. Out of this arrangement grew at length the building of a beautiful chapel in the adjacent grove, and the organization of a little church, over which the Rev. Dr. Chickering for some time presided. It was my privilege, as a young licentiate, to preach some of the first sermons in those parlor gatherings.

"The friendship thus begun continued, and was rendered more vital, if I may so say, by reunions at different times, and by concert of action on the wider scale of Christian evangelization. We met also under scenes of thrilling interest, when the Holy Spirit was doing his sublime but silent work at *Ware* and other places, and where Mr. Wilder was never more in his element, urging the impenitent to seek salvation, and imparting Christian counsel to the young convert.

"Anxious that his eldest daughter should form a character for zealous and consistent piety, he applied to me to write her on the subject. This I attempted; and finding my advice acceptable and

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useful, I kept on writing, until quite a little volume was the result; which, at Mr. Wilder's urgent solicitation, was published in 1828, under the title of "Advice to a Young Christian," with an admirable preface by Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander.

"These were links in our friendship strengthening with the lapse of time, brightening under the attrition of adversity—golden links, which death itself has no power to dim. Christian souls are leagued together for eternity; and though for the present I shall see his face no more, there will be hereafter an identification and recognition which shall be the more blissful for the earthly reminiscences.

"J. B. WATERBURY."

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XIII.

For their rock is not as our Rock, even themselves being judges. Deut. 32 : 31.

It was a strange episode in Mr. Wilder's life, that of his stay in Ware Factory Village, a total change from any surroundings or employment heretofore familiar. Here he found the stir, the gossip, the animation, the regularity of a manufacturing place, and was among a population so much thrown together in their daily employment as to favor the rapid spread of evil or of good. Here, on the retiring of the principal agent of the company, Mr. Wilder was called to combat error in a form new to him, a form seductive and plausible to a superficial mind, as well as tempting to a heart still clinging to sin and to the world. "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God;" may not the same truly be affirmed of those saying, There is no hell?

Into details of business arrangements which occasioned Mr. Wilder's removal for a time to Ware Village, it is not necessary to enter. That it was God in his providence who guided his way, is evident from the result.

He had been induced by friends in Boston to invest largely in a manufacturing company having its works in this village, but with no thought of giving personal attention to the matter, except such

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as might be required at stated meetings of the stockholders, where his experience among French manufactories gave his voice much weight. Being however soon elected a director in the company, and in September, 1825, its president, it became his duty occasionally to visit and inspect its factories, and afterwards, as will be seen, to make his home for a season in the pretty, square-built cottage belonging to the company, having a piazza all around it, supported on pillars of natural cedar-posts. This cottage was pleasantly located a little out of the village, not far from the rapid little stream carrying the works below, and which was bordered here and there by sheltering groves, destined ere long to become vocal with songs of praise, in place of the Sabbath-breaking revelry which had been wont to disgrace them.

Of his early visits to Ware Village, and of the events connected with his life there, Mr. Wilder writes:

"I soon ascertained that our head-machinist and agent were uncompromising Unitarians, and that they had placed as overseers in all the departments either Unitarians or Universalists; that most of the workmen, consisting of about two hundred in one machinist establishment, were of the same persuasions; that they attended no church or regular preaching, and that on each Sunday some hundred or more young men and women were in the habit of going on board the company's scows and rowing up the large pond of the establishment for a mile

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or two out of town, and having at a groggery what they called a jollification, thus desecrating the holy Sabbath. I also found that the old inhabitants, who were located from one to two miles around the village, and who were mostly orthodox, stood entirely aloof from associating with the establishment in any religious exercises.

"At a meeting held in Boston of the directors and principal stockholders, a large majority of whom were Unitarians, the question was who among the number would assent to go to Ware to have a supervision over the establishment until a suitable agent could be obtained. Gardner Green, one of the most wealthy men then in Boston, the president of the company, was in the chair. As I had retired from the busy concerns of mercantile life, I was at once fixed upon by those assembled to assume the responsibility of attending personally to the concerns of the establishment. But as I peremptorily declined to comply with their request, Mr. John Tappan and Samuel Hubbard, two of the orthodox directors present, whispered in the ear of the president that, in order to induce me to undertake the overseership, he would do well to propose that $3,000 towards building a church be subscribed, on condition that the good people in the neighborhood would raise $3,000 in addition, and then to invest me with full powers to superintend the erection of said house and of settling a pastor. When I heard the motion seconded, and saw twenty Unitarian hands elevated in behalf of carrying the mo-

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tion into effect, I did not dare to disregard the obvious call of Providence, and at once gave my assent. On returning home I told Mrs. Wilder that I should leave the next morning for Ware, and hoped that she would cheerfully consent to follow me with our little family as soon as our establishment at Bolton could be placed in a situation to be left for six months, the cottage at Ware being ready furnished waiting our reception.

"On arriving at Ware, it seems that the news had already reached the village of the decisions of the Boston company, and in walking through the various workshops and factories on the afternoon of my arrival, I think I never beheld so many sorrowful and wry faces. On the following evening I assembled all the old inhabitants of the neighborhood, who gave me a most cordial reception, made known to them the object of my mission, and stated to them that I had brought with me $3,000 towards building a meeting-house, on condition that a similar sum should be raised among themselves for its completion.

"In addition to this sum, I was authorized to select a spot on the company's lands for the location of the house. A subscription paper was immediately drawn up, and by heading the paper with $500 on my own account, I had the satisfaction of seeing subscribed that very evening $2,700, and in three days the $300 additional was made up. In ten days I had my plans for the house drawn out, and a contract for building it completed.

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"There were however two parties, one of which wished the house to be located on the hill, and the other in the valley nearer the centre of the village. Foreseeing that it would require $500 more to complete the house according to my views, I gave out that whichever party would first subscribe the requisite $500 in addition to their former subscriptions, the house should be located in conformity to their wishes. The hill party having raised this sum, the house was located on the hill.

"In consequence of the lawyer of the village having invited his brother-in-law the Rev. Parsons Cooke to preach for a Sabbath or two, I providentially found this orthodox clergyman at the village on my arrival there.

"The location of the church being decided on, at noon on the following day I dismissed all the hands, both male and female, consisting of some five hundred, and with Mr. Cooke on my right-hand we proceeded, with all the employées and some of the neighboring inhabitants, to the hill; and after addressing the assembled multitude, stating to them our object, and Mr. Cooke's offering an appropriate, impressive prayer for the blessing of God to descend and rest upon the contemplated sacred enterprise, we proceeded to stake out the ground and to consecrate the spot for the worship of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"In less than six months this temple was erected and completed, and I trust, by divine grace, has proved none other than the house of God, the very

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gate of heaven, to hundreds who now are worshipping in that sacred temple above.

"The next question was to make choice of a suitable pastor. After hearing the Rev. Parsons Cooke for several Sabbaths, the orthodox members of the church, being the majority, with great unanimity fixed on this clergyman, distinguished for soundness of doctrine, superior abilities, and eminent piety, as their first pastor.

"But few months had elapsed before there was a wonderful display of the power and grace of God in that highly favored village, in the conviction and conversion of sinners by the faithful, pungent preaching and parochial visits of the reverend pastor and deacons of the church. A glorious revival of religion was the result; and while hundreds were anxiously inquiring what they must do to be saved, a thrill of sacred joy penetrated the hearts of others, who had found peace, comfort, and consolation in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Among these were a good majority of the most inveterate opposers at the commencement of the work, and who afterwards, as far as my knowledge extends, evinced the sincerity of their professions by a corresponding conduct.

"This glorious revival extended into most of the neighboring towns in the years 1826 and 1827, and continued, to a greater or less extent, until the year 1831; at which time the cheering conviction prevailed in those regions that some thousands had been brought by the grace of God to a saving know-

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ledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Unto God alone be all the honor, all the praise, and all the glory. Thus ended my feeble endeavors to promote the blessed cause of the Lord Jesus Christ in that highly favored village, where I passed eighteen months, instead of six months, as first contemplated."

In constituting the church, as well as in the settlement of a pastor, peculiar difficulties were to be encountered, on account of the persons coming into it belonging to such a variety of sects. On this occasion an excellent sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Alfred Ely. The knot in question was cut by the simple expedient of requiring every member to come in anew upon profession. Mr. Wilder himself was glad to do this, for his name yet stood upon the books of a church in Boston which had become Unitarian. He said, "The more I saw of Unitarianism, the less I felt that in connection with it I belonged to the church of Christ; so that fourteen years after first joining the church, on forming a new church in Ware, I joined anew; and four years after did the same in Bolton, to avoid distinctions, and thus save the feelings of those who had Unitarian certificates."

"The period finally arrived," he further says, "for our return to our former residence at Bolton, and to quit for ever the thrilling scenes which it was my privilege to witness during by-gone months. A disposition, however, seemed to prevail among the three hundred converts to visit me at the cot-

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tage, to unite once more in prayer and songs of praise, and to receive my farewell. I yielded to their solicitation, and on the eve of our departure the cottage was thronged, not only with the recent converts, but with many yet anxious inquirers and many of the older members of the church. Among others present was the Rev. Dr. Waterbury, then minister at Hatfield, who took an active part in the exercises of the evening; during which it devolved on me to occupy for a short period the attention of the audience with a farewell address."

Mr. Wilder spoke, in part, as follows: "Eighteen months have rolled away since I became a resident among you, and in taking a retrospective view of the past, I cannot but exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!' Yes, my friends, eighteen months ago we were destitute of a church, a pastor, and a temple for the worship of God; and when I reflect that we now have an evangelical church established, a pious, devoted pastor settled, a house of worship erected, and above all, that it has pleased God to shed down upon us during the past year a blessed shower of divine grace, whereby many precious souls have been born into the kingdom of God—I say, when I reflect on all these manifold favors, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude at the recollection of all these mercies, and unto Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all the praise.

"To you who have been the highly favored subjects of this renewing grace—you whom I have beheld bathed in tears and anxiously inquiring what

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you must do to be saved—you who have passed from death unto life—you who have found peace, comfort, and consolation in believing on the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and who have come forward and acknowledged him before men—to you I bid an affectionate farewell. Oh may you find grace to enable you to persevere in well-doing unto the end. I shall ever take the most lively interest in your well-being, and I do look forward with ecstasy to that glorious day when, if our faith fail not, we may be permitted to meet where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and where sorrow and sighing and parting are unknown.

"But if there are any here who are yet out of the ark of safety, who have resisted or grieved away the Holy Spirit, and who remain careless and unconcerned with regard to the things which pertain to your peace, to you I bid a sorrowful farewell. Oh how often have my prayers ascended in your behalf to the throne of grace, that your hearts might be pierced with the arrow of conviction, that you might be brought to fling down the weapons of your rebellion, and submit to the mild sceptre of Jesus Christ while he is yet extending the arms of everlasting mercy, inviting you to 'flee from the wrath to come.' I now invite you, for the last time, to lay hold of the salvation which is offered you in the gospel. Oh reflect on the sufferings of Him who agonized in the sorrowful garden of Gethsemane, and poured out his precious blood on Calvary to redeem you from the power and just punishment of

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sin. May you never have cause to take up the lamentation, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'

"Not a dry eye was to be seen, and nothing was to be heard but suppressed sobs, amid which I commended them to the God of all grace, and bade one and all an affectionate farewell; it being one of the most trying and touching scenes that I had ever experienced."

Many highly interesting incidents connected with the revival in Ware village, each teaching some useful lesson, were related by Mr. Wilder, the striking character of which is indicated by the two following, given from his own lips:

"At the commencement of this revival there was an occurrence so evidently showing the interposition of Providence, that its details should not be passed in silence.

"It was asserted by some leading and influential Unitarians and Universalists, that unless immediate measures were adopted to counteract the baneful influence of the revival, the disgrace and ruin of the village would be the inevitable consequence. A meeting was therefore called by the most inveterate opponents of the revival, with a view to get up a dancing-school in the public singing hall. Forty males and females were induced to subscribe on the spot, and a resolution was passed to dispatch a messenger at once to engage a famous dancing-master at Deerfield to instruct the school, which was to be opened as soon as fifty subscribers were obtained. He came to Ware immediately, and it was fixed that said school should open at three o'clock P. M. on the following Friday.

"In the meantime a young man, a prime mover in this enterprise, who on a rainy day accompanied the dancing-

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master from house to house with a view to complete the required number of subscribers, took cold; a bilious colic ensued, and on Wednesday evening he was summoned to the retributions of eternity, the dancing-master watching his pillow of sickness, and endeavoring to alleviate the agonies of death.

"The funeral of this young man was appointed to take place at one o'clock on Friday; but in consequence of delay in the coming of some relatives, the procession did not reach the graveyard until near three o'clock; the attendants struck with the melancholy and appalling fact that God had caused the mortal remains of the originator of the dancing-school to be consigned to the silent grave on the very day and the very hour that that school was to have opened.

"On the same ever memorable evening, the aforesaid dancing-master rushed into our prayer-meeting, and flinging himself on his knees, exclaimed, 'What shall I do to be saved?' relating the sad and trying scenes he had experienced the last three days, saying that he should never more dance, and requesting an interest in our prayers.

"The dancing-school was of course abandoned, and to the praise and glory of God be it said, the dancing-master, with most of the aforesaid subscribers, were shortly under deep conviction and among our most anxious inquirers, and at length obtained a glorious and joyful hope of having passed from death unto life."

Another incident occurred relating to a Mr. B——, one of the most prominent Universalist leaders, whose house was opposite to the cottage, and near the academy where the evening meetings were held.

"On my way one evening to attend the prayer-meeting, I said to a tall, robust, athletic man who was standing in his door-way, 'Come, Mr. B——, suppose you should accompany me to our delightful prayer-meeting, to hear what God's dear people have to say on the sacred things which pertain to our eternal peace.' 'This,' said he, 'may be well enough for old women and children; but a man of sense like me knows better. You will therefore excuse me. If there is any heaven,

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we shall all go there. Besides, I belong to a very long-lived family; my great-grandfather having lived to upwards of a hundred years, my grandfather to ninety-five and upwards, and my father and mother are already above seventy; if there is any necessity of examining into the truth of your assertions, it is time enough for me to attend to them some thirty or forty years hence.' 'Well,' said I, 'Mr. B——, I see nothing to be done in your case but to pray for you.' 'Well,' said he, 'I want none of your prayers;' and I proceeded, with a sorrowful heart to the prayer-meeting.

"On returning to the village, after an absence of about three weeks, one of his children came running over to the cottage as I was alighting from my carriage, saying that his father was very sick, and wished to see me. I hastened over to his house, hearing they had sent several times within a few days to know if I had arrived. On entering the sick-room, which was on the first floor, I beheld B—— stretched upon what proved to be his dying couch; who exclaimed, his face much flushed, indicating a high fever, 'Here I am, and I'm a going to die; and I want you to pray with me and for me.'

"'You going to die,' I said tenderly, 'who told me that if there was any reality in religion, it was time enough for you to attend to it thirty or forty years hence?' 'Ah, sir,' said he, 'it was mere braggadocio; I talked like a fool. The fever rages so in my strong system that I must yield to its unrelenting grasp.' 'Well, Mr. B——, if you really believe that you are going to die, allow me to say for your comfort and consolation, that the Lord Jesus Christ has said, 'He that believeth *shall* be saved.'' 'Ah,' said he, 'that is a most comfortable doctrine.' 'But,' said I, 'what follows?' 'He that believeth not,' said he with a loud voice, 'shall be damned.' Said I, 'Do you believe that to be a fact, Mr. B——?' 'Ah,' he replied, 'let any one be racked, both in body and mind, with the agonies which I have experienced the last three days on this bed of sickness, and he will know there can be a hell.' And raising his arms from under the bedclothes, and clenching his hands, he exclaimed, 'Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my poor soul.' On hearing this, his

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aged mother from B——, who had come to attend him during his sickness, approached the bed and thrust his arms under the bedclothes, saying, 'Nonsense; you 'll take cold, my son;' and then turning to me, said the doctor had directed that he should be kept free from excitement and perfectly quiet. I observed that I perfectly coincided with them in opinion, offering my services if in any way I could be useful in alleviating his sufferings; and after hearing his declaration as a dying man, that he 'never *really* believed in the doctrine of universal salvation,' that he 'only *hoped* it was true, as was the case with three quarters or more of the whole sect,' I retired, hearing him exclaim until I reached the middle of the street, 'Pray for me; pray for me; pray for me.'

"On revisiting this once deluded man the next morning, the pressure on the brain had been so intense by the ravages of the fever that he had become delirious. At three o'clock P. M. his immortal spirit was transferred to the untried realities of the eternal state."

"I could relate many other interesting scenes during the residence of myself and family in that highly-favored village; but enough has been said to illustrate the power of the grace of God in making use of the most feeble instruments in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and for the accomplishment of his wise designs."

The following valuable testimony to the success of Mr. Wilder's efforts in Ware is given, among other reminiscences, by Lewis Tappan, Esq.:

"At Ware were a number of large factory-buildings in full operation, under the superintendence of Mr. Wilder, as temporary agent of the corporation. The directors lived in Boston; and although there were in the direction Gardner Green, Esq., Hon. Samuel Hubbard, and John Tappan, Esq., a majority were Unitarians.

"Intelligence had been conveyed to the Board by some

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of the overseers in the factories who were of the Universalist persuasion, at a time when a revival of religion prevailed at Ware, that the agent sacrificed the interests of the corporation by allowing many of the hands to attend the religious meetings during the regular work-hours. Being about making my annual visit to Ware as treasurer of the corporation, to examine the accounts and look after the general interests of the concern, I was particularly instructed by the directors to inquire into the facts reported, and lay the result before the Board on my return.

"Belonging as I then did to the Unitarian body, I determined to make thorough inquiry, and report the precise facts. Accordingly, after spending several days at Ware, and completing the usual business that called me there, I arranged to have the overseers of the different rooms separately at my room in the hotel, that I might learn from them the true state of things. I went into an examination of the number of hands employed in the different rooms that year and the previous year, of the quantity of cloth and yarn manufactured in each year, and followed up this investigation from evening to evening. On making up my report for the directors, I found to my surprise that the work actually accomplished during that year, when religious meetings were so abundant, considerably exceeded the quantity produced by the same number of hands the year previous. I stated this to the overseers and to the agent; the former being more surprised at the result than I had been, while the agent expressed no surprise at all, it being about what he had supposed.

"On receiving my report at Boston, the directors were well satisfied, mysterious as the result was, that the agent had not been wanting in his duty to the corporation, while he promoted the religious interests of the work-people, who had made up loss of time by greater diligence and faithfulness."

The various exercises connected with the new church in Ware Village, more especially the great revival of religion following its erection, brought together, and to Mr. Wilder's acquaintance, many

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of the neighboring clergy. Rev. Leonard Woods, D. D., coming during Mr. Wilder's absence, left for him the following note:

"WARE, May 4, 1826.

"MY DEAR SIR—Could I and mine have enjoyed your company, it would have much increased our pleasure, which has still been very great. The Lord bless the people collected in this interesting place, and give success to your efforts to do them good. And may a blessed day come when the fruits of the Spirit shall abound here to the glory of God, and the Saviour himself shall dwell here. I long to see you, to converse on the precious concerns of Christ's kingdom. Oh, sir, bless God that you have a heart to love his name and his cause, and that you have the happiness of doing something to show your love and your gratitude to the kindest and best of beings.

"Yours sincerely,

"L. WOODS."

Rev. Dr. Mark Tucker, with a heart kindled by revival fires in his own congregation at Northampton, would sometimes bring his home experience to help gather in the harvest at Ware. Rev. Dr. Joseph Vaill, then of Brimfield, already known to Mr. Wilder in connection with Amherst college, also aided in the good work, and thus cemented with Mr. Wilder a lasting friendship—lasting, though temporarily interrupted by distance, and now, alas, by death.

Mr. Wilder ever retained all his associates in this church enterprise in affectionate remembrance. Deacon Cummings, Deacon Thwing, Mr. Dimond, and others, he could never forget. In September, 1859, Deacon Cummings wrote a letter to Mr. Wil-

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der, in which, after referring to the thrilling scenes through which they had passed together, he speaks of Mr. Wilder's coming to reside in Ware Village, as "a particular providence in answer to the prayers of a few evangelical Christians there, who had been praying without ceasing, that God in his providence would interpose and roll back the tide of error and wickedness which seemed to come in like a flood, but for which signal answer they were hardly prepared." Deacon Cummings goes on to say, "It has ever been plain to my mind that God raised you up and prepared you to be the instrument, and blessed your efforts in the cause of Christ in this village; nor has the influence of your labor, under God, ceased to be felt to this day. You are yet remembered by those who were then young, but have taken the place of the fathers; and it would give me inconceivable delight could I once more look upon your countenance, and grasp your friendly hand."

How many are there who, like Mr. Wilder, leave behind them the imprint of a heart so warm and so much in earnest in his Master's business? How many who leave such "footprints in the sands of time?" Let the young Christian be encouraged to follow in such steps. Such footprints are not destructible by the tides of time. Nay, rather, as if crystallized into eternal rock, they may yet perhaps be seen among the records of eternity.

The Rev. Dr. Parsons Cooke, the then young pastor, in 1826, of the new Ware Village church, was

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the distinguished laborer in this revival of the work of God; growing, as he did, rapidly in the estimation not only of his own people, but in that of the public at large, and becoming such a champion of the truth, as often to be called to the very fore-front of the battle in the conflict with Universalism and every form of error. Well might he be surnamed Boanerges. In the comparative quiet of Ware Village he first learned the use of weapons afterwards wielded by him with great power. Systematic benevolence found in him an able advocate. A calm exterior almost concealed the strong, warm heart that was practically revealed in his earnest life.

After Mr. Wilder had left Ware, the church there, in 1828, was favored with another revival. Mr. Cooke wrote to Mr. Wilder, urging his presence with them. In 1856 he wrote to Mr. Wilder of their long friendship, long interrupted, never broken up. His letter was in answer to one from Mr. Wilder, whose heart ever clung to the friends of earlier as well as later days.

"LYNN, Dec. 1, 1856.

"S. V. S. WILDER, ESQ.:

"MY DEAR SIR—I was much gratified to-day by the receipt of a letter, which not only assured me that your valuable life is still preserved, but also assured me that your personal identity is beyond dispute. It was pleasant to me to have the long silence broken, for really the former events to which you allude, in which Providence strangely brought

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us together, and wrought effectually by our joint instrumentality, should forbid us to become again the strangers that we have been for these many years.

"Last summer I had a pressing invitation to return to Ware, and I made the people there a visit. That is now, I think, one of the best churches in Hampshire county, and one of the most efficient in benevolent objects. It has connected with it many able and sterling men. There are ten men in the church who have, there or elsewhere, borne the office of deacon. It is evident to any one who surveys the ground at Ware, that the founders of that church have not lived in vain. Pardon the egotism of my letter, and believe me, as ever,

"Your very affectionate friend,

"PARSONS COOKE."

They have met again, these two early associates in building unto the Lord, where no disappointment could attend the recognition. They walk together again; but now it is upon "the hill of Zion," in that land crowned by no "temple made with hands." There is "no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

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XIV.

That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. John 5 : 23.

THE Rev. Dr. J. W. Chickering gives the following statements, substantially as in the volume written by him several years ago, and known as the "Hill-side Church."

Soon after Mr. Wilder's return from France to Bolton, he felt himself called upon to take measures to establish there a church for the promulgation of the doctrines of the Reformation, and, as he earnestly believed, of the New Testament, many of which were denied, and others modified or ignored in most of the pulpits in that vicinity.

Especially did he lament the absence, in prayer and preaching, of the ancient and scriptural forms of sound words, with the vital truths they express connected with the person and work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"To erect a house for the worship of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and for the preaching of the pure doctrines of the gospel, the truth as it is in Jesus"—this was his favorite mode of expressing what became the leading purpose of his heart. The Rev. Dr. Vaill, who was requested to deliver the address at the laying of the corner-

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stone, both at Ware and at Bolton, speaks of this as "the great idea of Mr. Wilder's life."

For an undertaking involving so much expense, and so much reproach too, in a community where he would, in such a movement, be looked upon only as a disturber of the public peace, Mr. Wilder was peculiarly fitted. He not only had the pecuniary means to carry out the enterprise on a liberal scale, but he had mingled enough with men to have his native courage and self-reliance fully developed.

Having "stood before kings," and, as he used to say with some humorous emphasis, "before mean men," he never hesitated to say or do what he thought would honor and please "the Lord he loved."

Mr. Wilder had been in the habit of going frequently, on the Sabbath, to a neighboring town, where the gospel was preached with some degree of clearness; but he felt the impropriety of enjoying such privileges for himself and a part of his family, while others were left at home without public worship. This feeling was strengthened by a question one day proposed by a young daughter: "Papa, which shall I believe? What I hear at B——, or what I hear at L——?"

But perhaps the most directly impelling motive to immediate "church erection" remains to be mentioned.

Among the hospitable customs at the elegant mansion at the hill-side, was the weekly entertainment at dinner of some of the neighboring minis-

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ters. On one such occasion, a distinct inquiry addressed to Rev. Mr. —— as to the views he entertained concerning the character and work of Christ, brought out, for substance, the following answer: that He was a derived being, of pure and exalted character, by whose example and teachings we might be enabled, through virtuous living, to merit the favor of God, and happiness hereafter in his presence. This was too much both for the conscience and the heart of Mr. Wilder, who had learned to rest all his hopes on the atoning sacrifice of a divine Redeemer, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

His last attendance at the church in L—— occurred on a communion Sabbath. He felt it an imperative though painful duty to retire with his family before the celebration of that ordinance, the very essence of which, as the supper of the Cross, had evaporated from those ministrations in the process of theological change since his fathers had worshipped near the same spot.

This proceeding was noticed, with various emotions, by different classes of observers, and among others by a pious man of the Baptist persuasion, who had long sighed for the spiritual privileges which his soul loved.

He soon called on Mr. Wilder, and alluded to his course on the preceding Sabbath. They had a full and free conference respecting what had long lain near both their hearts—the honor of their divine Saviour, and the duty of providing for them-

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selves and others the pure ordinances of his gospel.

Mr. B—— remarked in the course of conversation that he greatly desired to see a new house of worship built, and a church gathered. "How much," asked Mr. Wilder, "do you desire it?" "Very much indeed," was his reply. "Yes, but I am a pounds, shillings, and pence man, and I would still ask *how much* you desire it?" "Ah, sir, I understand you; but I am a poor man, and can do but little." "Well, I will make a proposition: you may put down on this paper as many hundreds of dollars as you think proper, and I will put down as many thousands." "*Will you?*" exclaimed Mr. B——, rising and walking the room in great agitation. "Yes; and in addition, I will give you your choice of four or six acres out of my farm as a site, anywhere except in front of my house." Mr. B—— now subscribed three hundred dollars, and had the pleasure of seeing eleven times that sum immediately on paper.

The interview ended with a walk into a beautiful grove on Mr. Wilder's extensive domain for the purpose of making the proposed selection of a site for the new sanctuary. Mr. B—— led the way into the forest, and we may imagine Mr. Wilder's emotions on finding the place selected to be the very one on which, with a friend, he had long before kneeled in prayer, imploring that the way might be opened for such a structure to be reared upon that very spot.

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So vivid were the impressions of that night-scene—for, to avoid observation, the place had been visited by moonlight—that some of the very words of that first prayer, on the spot whence so many public devotions afterwards ascended, have been preserved:

"Oh, thou great Jehovah, thou Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thou God over all, blessed for ever, director and controller of all events: if it be for thine honor and glory; if it be for the advancement of the glorious cause of the divine and crucified Redeemer in this world, grant that a house may be here erected which shall prove none other than the house of God, the very gate of heaven to thousands of immortal souls, who through the blood and righteousness, the great atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, may hereafter be permitted to worship in that celestial temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Thenceforth neither Mr. Wilder nor the Christian brother who chose the same location, felt any necessity for a pillar of cloud to direct their way in that particular. The place for the altar was already provided.

When completed, this was one of the most tasteful and commodious church edifices in New England. A lofty and neatly furnished suit of rooms, three in number, occupied the basement. Two of these were fitted up as reading-rooms, and kept supplied with religious publications designed for those who might wish to remain during the inter-

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mission. Seats within hearing of the services in the lecture-room, but quite out of sight of the audience, were also provided, called by Mr Wilder "Nicodemus seats." An organ, furnaces, and every convenience and elegance then in use, completed the interior arrangements; while a costly clock, striking the hours upon a bell of nearly two thousand pounds weight, proclaimed to the startled traveller on the lonely hill-side, and to dwellers in the neighboring villages, that a new sanctuary had risen, as if by magic in a night, on Bolton hill.

Beautiful for situation was that octagonal structure, with all its surroundings. It stood on the edge of a large and well-trimmed park, with its paths and arbors, and commanded a view of distant mountains, with a charming valley in the foreground. Along those plains, and on the ridges and slopes which varied the monotonous level of the river intervales, a dozen pleasant villages nestled under ancient elms and sycamores.

The new, unique, and beautiful house was finished and dedicated; each step, as the breaking of the ground, laying the corner-stone, and the dedication, having been "sanctified by the word of God and prayer," and conducted upon a liberal scale of courtesy and hospitality in the invitation and entertainment of ministers and others from far and near. "The fatted calf" was never wanting, and a kind welcome was always ready on such occasions.

The thoughtful projector of the enterprise anticipated what would have otherwise been a pressing

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deficiency, by having a singing-school opened beforehand at his own expense. The necessary books were also provided, and other arrangements made for the simultaneous opening of a Sabbath-school, that indispensable accompaniment and nursery of the church.

So this church, the child of faith and prayer and generosity, sprung at once into an existence rather mature than infantile. The services of able preachers were secured for single Sabbaths or longer periods. Among these may be mentioned the name of the elder Beecher, then already venerable in years and wisdom, and clothed with the eloquence of truth and feeling as with a garment; and the youthful Christmas, early taken from the churches of which, first in Montreal and then in New York, he had begun to be a bright and shining light, in which many rejoiced, and whose gentle, persuasive, though at times bold and overpowering eloquence, thrilled many a heart, and by God's blessing, it is hoped saved many a soul of those first assemblies on Bolton hill; Dr. John Codman of Dorchester also, who had remained firmly anchored to the truth while others around had drifted away into a sea of error; Dr. James Milnor of New York, so lovely and unsectarian in his views of Christian unity; Professor Edward Hitchcock of Amherst, ever mindful that science is but the handmaid of revelation; Dr. Palmer of Charleston; Drs. Woods, Stuart, and Skinner of Andover; and many others of the best of the land, all came from time to time to aid,

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with full force and varied powers of heart and mind, in waking up the long slumber in that vicinity as to religious matters.

Public attention was aroused. Some "who came to scoff remained to pray," and assumed new relations to the infant congregation. God crowned the undertaking with his gracious as well as his providential blessing. The Spirit was not withheld; and when, in April, 1830, Rev. J. W. Chickering was ordained as pastor, a church of thirty-six members, of whom half were males, had just been organized.

Almost the first act of the church was the observance of a day of fasting and prayer with reference to the commencement of the ministry of reconciliation, under circumstances so peculiar and so well fitted to impress all hearts with a sense of entire dependence upon God.

Through two short ministries the church continued united and prosperous, quadrupling its original membership, and standing side by side with its sister churches in contributing to every good work.

An important agency in this increase was one of those occasions known as four days' meetings. This series of meetings was held in August, 1831, and largely attended, both by the neighboring population and by ministers from various quarters, it being one of the first of an extensive series held about that time in New England. Rev. Messrs. Parsons Cooke, Henry G. Ludlow, John Todd, with the youthful pastor, and other clergymen to the number of twenty or thirty, either took part in the services at the

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crowded church and vestry, or held evening meetings in some ten or twelve different neighborhoods, whence scores of awakened persons came in on the following days to the central meeting.

Few who were present at the close will ever forget the sermon by Rev. Parsons Cooke, from the text, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." And when, on invitation, some three hundred rose as an expression of their desire for prayer and of their purpose to seek and serve the Lord, it seemed as if the fountain of salvation was not only open, but about to be resorted to by the entire assembly.

In preparation for the opening of the church, Mr. Wilder had engaged a well-known chorister in an adjacent town to teach a singing-school and organize a choir. On occasion of these extra services, he invited this teacher to bring his own choir of about twenty-five members to take charge of the music. They came. It was said that all of them, excepting one, received a blessing, being hopefully brought to Christ during or soon after the meeting.

Nor were these fruits temporary. The membership of the infant church was soon more than doubled. Many joined other evangelical churches in the places of their residence; in several of which there were revivals, evidently connected with the quickening thus received by pastors and members.

Though in the midst of opposition, "the word of God grew and multiplied." So did the little church,

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both then and subsequently. Its members, whether at that or more ordinary periods in its history, generally adorned the doctrines of God our Saviour, and have served his cause in various ways in different lands.

The prosperity thus graciously given but served, by multiplying its members from the different towns, to prepare the way for the more speedy growth of several branches from the parent stock. This process has gone on until there are now some ten or twelve evangelical organizations in the four towns, among which this church at first stood alone as the representative of the faith of the fathers.

The little band of twelve, who alone were found ready to avow their attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation, have now become more than "two bands," and their number has been multiplied, it is supposed, a hundred-fold.

How much of all this is to be traced directly to the commencement of the Hill-side enterprise at that time, can never be known on earth. Nor is it important, since all the glory belongs to God; to whom let it be ever given.

As no village had grown up in that neighborhood, and nearly all who had worshipped there had now such privileges as they desired nearer home, and as Mr. Wilder had removed from Bolton, his farm having passed into other hands, public worship in the Hill-side church was after a time suspended.

The long silence within those walls was broken,

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probably for the last time, about the going down of the sun on Sabbath afternoon, July 10, 1859. A large assembly came together from all directions to unite in one more religious service, conducted by the first pastor, Rev. Dr. Chickering of Portland. Should its walls never again echo to the voice of a preacher proclaiming salvation through a crucified Saviour, there are many hearts in which the echo of such sounds already heard there will never cease.

Every Christian heart must agree with the declaration of its generous projector, sad but not cast down, in the prospect of its being closed, "It was paid for when the first soul was converted to Christ in it." Among those works still following him, perhaps none are producing richer fruits than what he was accustomed, with characteristic completeness of expression, to designate as "the evangelical Congregational church of Bolton, Lancaster, Sterling, and Stow."

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XV.

Created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Ephes. 2 : 10.

The engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1 : 21.

Much has already been said of Mr. Wilder's early connection with the religious and charitable societies of Europe; and among them was laid the foundation of the unwavering interest he ever afterwards took in associations of the same kind in this country. While never forgetting in theory or in practice that factor of "pure religion," "to visit the fatherless and widows," the sick, the afflicted from whatever cause, among the rich as well as among the poor, he still fully recognized the cumulative power of association and division of labor in work for Christ, as well as in ordinary branches of industry. His coöperation with various benevolent societies was perhaps the distinctive feature of his character as a philanthropist.

Among Mr. Wilder's papers is found a memorandum of twenty-one different societies and institutions of more or less importance, with which he was variously connected. To the name of each is attached his relation to it, and the time of its annual meeting. Such a memorandum was indeed neces-

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sary, or duty might probably have been forgotten. The paper is dated 1827.

While the Bible Society never lost in Mr. Wilder's estimation the noble precedence its work demands, yet, as in the providence of God the *American Tract Society* became more closely a part of his life-work, his connection with this Society seems naturally to claim our first attention. The facts necessary are furnished by his long-known and valued friend Rev. William A. Hallock, its senior Secretary, so well qualified to do this by his personal knowledge of them from the beginning, as also by his honest, heartfelt love for his venerated friend and coadjutor.

Of this Society Mr. Wilder was unanimously elected President, at its formation in the city of New York, in May, 1825. Such before then had been his interest in the New York Religious Tract Society, that, as early as 1817, when about to sail from New York to France, he called on the late Zechariah Lewis, Esq., then Secretary of that Society, inviting attention more particularly to efforts for the French and Spanish, handing him fifty dollars for that object, and giving instructions to his agent to give the same annually for five succeeding years. He also took a deep interest with his early friend and associate John Tappan, Esq., in the Tract Society at Boston, and was active in various ways in promoting its prosperity, as his correspondence with his friend Dr. Hallock, then Assistant Secretary of the Society in Boston, abundantly

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shows. A singular incident related in that correspondence, connected with Mr. Wilder's romantic visit to the aged parents of Rev. Dr. King, their "only son" as above related may, to the eye of divine Providence, have had a bearing on future events then wholly unanticipated.

Returning from that visit, Mr. Wilder had proceeded but three miles in the adjoining town of Plainfield before nightfall, when, having taken tea at the public-house, he spoke with the landlady as to the spiritual welfare of her numerous children; and learning that none of the family had hope in Christ, "Is it possible," said he, "living here right under this spire pointing up to heaven? How can this be? Who is your minister?" "Rev. Moses Hallock," said she, "a good and faithful man. It is n't his fault." "I must go and see him, and ask how this can be," said Mr. Wilder; and a most delightful Christian interview was held by these servants of Christ, who met as utter strangers in their pilgrimage, and expected never to meet again till they should see their glorious Redeemer as he is.

Not long after this Dr. Hallock visited his parents at Plainfield, spending a night with Mr. Wilder on his way; and December 4, 1824, he wrote to Mr. Wilder from Andover:

"The day after receiving your blessing as I left your most hospitable dwelling, I arrived safely at my father's, and did them the pleasure to present them the kind regards of 'the stranger' whom they will never forget. The father of Rev. Jonas King, hear-

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ing that I had seen you, came over to see me, and with the tenderest emotions of love and gratitude, inquired for your prosperity, and wished you a thousand blessings.

"I found myself in possession of many rich treasures of interesting facts I had received from you, especially your distribution of tracts, at the hazard of life, in the great Romish celebration of Mount Calvary, near Paris, your last visit at 'the Village in the Mountains,' and your managing your home establishment of six hundred acres without the use of ardent spirits. A most excellent aunt of mine said she spent half the night in thinking of the benevolence which impelled you to such efforts in France, the dangers to which you were exposed,*

* In September, 1822, Mr. and Mrs. Wilder visited "Mount Calvary," near Paris, where is held an annual Roman-catholic celebration of several days, attended by thousands of pilgrims from various parts of France. On the summit is a church, and in front of it three crosses, with figures large as life of Christ and the two thieves. Within a few days seventeen hundred tracts, chiefly our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and many Testaments were distributed among the crowds spread over the mountain, on which were various stations for relieving the diseased, prayers for the dead, etc. Mr. Wilder had been distributing on the summit, and wending his way downwards, had rejoined Mrs. Wilder, when, as they were continuing the distribution, suddenly a boy cried out in French, "You are lost! you are lost! There is the gendarme. Hide yourselves." Mr. Wilder saw the gendarme coming down the hill, followed by a crowd in the form of a wedge, and crying, "Where is he? where is he?" Mr. Wilder at once coolly presented himself in front of the gendarme, saying with his usual dignity, "I presume, sir, I am

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and the kind Providence which rescued you and made you so useful. The *sequel to the Village in the Mountains*, and the illustration of the benefit of Temperance in Farming, as tracts, would be better than silver and gold in promoting the interests of the Tract Society and the Redeemer's kingdom, and I trust you will not feel at liberty to withhold the facts. If best, I am willing the publishing of these accounts shall be deferred till the *National Society*, on which we conferred so fully, shall be in active operation, if this is the will of Providence, and I trust it is.

"We have had a reply from the Committee of the New York Society, and our Committee (at Boston) have appointed Tuesday evening, January 11, at the Park-street vestry, for a meeting of the Society to act on this important subject. We wish all the members of the Society to be present, and especially yourself, who have conversed with friends at New York, and feel interested in the subject proposed."

the man you are seeking." "What, are you the man who is distributing these vile books?" "No vile books at all, sir; I am distributing the history of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and sayings of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," naming the edition of the New Testament, "and allow me, sir, to present you a copy." The gendarme took the book and examined it. "Allow me also to present a copy to each of your attendants," said Mr. Wilder, which was done; and sundry conversations occurring as to the character of the book, the gendarme said, "Well, I will take it up to my superiors;" and thus ended the matter.

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Mr. Wilder went down from Bolton and attended and took part in this meeting in Boston, when the whole subject was referred to the Executive Committee for further negotiation. On the 12th of March, 1825, Dr. Hallock wrote Mr. Wilder from the city of New York:

"I cannot repress the gratification with which I inform you of the proceedings of yesterday in this city, knowing as I do the deep interest you have taken in the establishment of a *Tract Society for our country*. As the result of negotiations and the most careful consideration, a Constitution had been agreed on acceptable to all evangelical denominations, and last evening, at a large public meeting in the City Hotel, it was unanimously adopted, and officers, including a Publishing Committee representing as many denominations as it has members, were unanimously elected, as preliminary to the calling of a convention of all the evangelical Tract Societies in the country in May, to establish a truly national permanent Society.

"All these measures have been adopted with reference to obtaining a house and lot for the Society's accommodation. A careful examination has shown that $20,000 will be necessary to give the Society every facility, free of rent, and it is the unanimous opinion of discreet friends, that we cannot proceed to do any thing, not even to lift a hammer, till this sum is obtained. It is necessary that so much be done to give the Christian public assurance that the Society shall be protected and fos-

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tered here, and to enable it to publish tracts at so cheap a rate and in such quantities as to meet the demands of the nation, and as to render it for the advantage of all other Tract Societies to depend on this for a supply.

"I am happy to state to you that Mr. Arthur Tappan gave $5,000, Moses Allen $3,000, and William W. Chester and Richard T. Haines $1,000 each, and that $2,300 were added last evening, making $12,300; and we shall go right forward and make a struggling effort to obtain the remaining $7,700 as soon as possible. Have you, my dear sir, any of this shining dust, that you wish to put into this building to be used for filling the country and the world with religious tracts, each of which, to use your own words, 'shall contain gospel enough, if it finds its way where a Bible was never seen and a preacher's voice never heard, to be the means of saving a soul,' long after you and I shall be laid under the cold clods of the valley? If so, this is the moment when your donation will be most gratefully received. The interest now felt by the active friends of the Lord Jesus in this city for the accomplishment of this object is very great, and all the aid they receive is regarded with the deepest interest and with gratitude to God.

"My dear sir, I have taken my pen to announce to you that, with the cordial approbation of all the friends from the various denominations consulted previous to the preliminary meeting, and all who were there assembled, you are nominated *President*

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of the National Society to be organized in May, and we beg you to signify to us your willingness to serve the Society in this capacity, and thus give us the results of your experience and wisdom in the tract cause in every way which you think can benefit this interesting Society. And, my dear sir, let us have your prayers and the prayers of the circle of pious friends whom you are accustomed to meet. You have often agitated the inquiry why you were permitted to leave *France*. Perhaps, sir, the millions of the redeemed who shall be saved by the instrumentality of this Society, which you have done so much to form, and shall do so much to guide and foster, when you meet them coming into the mansions of the blessed, will show you one reason at least why you were permitted to leave France."

To this letter Mr. Wilder made the following reply:

"BOLTON, March 16, 1825.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—I have duly received your much valued favor of the 11th instant, communicating to me the gratifying intelligence that a National Religious Tract Society has been established in New York, and a constitution formed on the most enlarged and general principles, which has received the unanimous approbation of the different denominations of evangelical Christians, and which was accepted without a dissenting voice. Thus far are my prayers answered, my desire accomplished, my heart cheered and filled with praise, gratitude, and

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adoration to God, who in his infinite goodness works such wonders in our day by giving existence to an association which I trust, by the aid of the all-powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, will prove instrumental in bringing thousands of perishing sinners to the foot of the cross, and will be hailed by future generations as one of the greatest blessings, next to that of the Bible and Missionary Societies, ever conferred on fallen man.

"With this high estimate of the beneficial tendency and effects of your institution, I cannot but connect that of the responsibility attached to the station which its friends have been pleased to assign to me by a unanimous wish that I should become its president. While I duly appreciate this testimony of respect, and am most sensible of the high honor conferred upon me by your Committee in placing me in so distinguished a situation for the promotion of such a cause, yet a consciousness of my own unworthiness, and a conviction that there are many others more able and better qualified than myself to fulfil its important duties, would of itself lead me to decline this honor; but when I consider how indispensably requisite it is for the interests of the institution that its president should be a resident of New York city, I cannot consent, even for a moment, to be considered as a candidate.

"Should it ever please the great Director of all human events to assign me a residence in that highly favored city, I beg leave to assure your Committee that I should not only consider it a pleasing

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duty to occupy any station for which I was qualified, and to share with you and them in the delightful labors of this institution, but should esteem it my highest privilege to be permitted thus to consecrate my life in testifying my love and gratitude to that Saviour who lived, suffered, died, rose again, and still intercedes to deliver us from the power and just punishment of sin.

"I can and do most truly rejoice and praise God for the bountiful assistance your institution received on the evening of its organization by the liberality of its friends who were present. Desirous of contributing my mite to this great and glorious object, I herewith enclose you my draft on Nathaniel Richards, Esq., for five hundred dollars.

"With admiration for the happy results which, with the blessing of God, I foresee will attend the faithful labors and pious efforts of your Committee, the most fervent prayers for the increasing success of your Society, and a peculiar interest in your personal share of its operations, I beg leave to assure your Committee of my sentiments of esteem and gratitude, and yourself of the high consideration and personal attachment wherewith I have the honor to be, reverend and dear sir,

"Yours most truly,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

On the third of April, Dr. Hallock wrote Mr. Wilder that his letter was very cheering to the little circle of friends in New York, who for many

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days had met at nine o'clock P. M. to report the aid God had given during the day for this favorite object, and to ask his blessing on their future endeavors; and that his donation of $500 could never have been more seasonable or more gratefully received. "Even your reluctance to sustain the office of president but endeared you to us the more, and no one suffered his confidence to be chilled for a moment by it, as we were sure, when you knew all the facts, you would feel that Providence called you to the station, and would not withhold your services. We do not suffer the idea of your declining to linger a moment in our minds; we cannot listen to it; every thing conspires to lead you into that office. We know you will not dampen our zeal and discourage our efforts so much as to deny us and our country your services.

"We hope you will not fail to be with us on the 11th of May at the public organization of the national Society, and the *laying of the corner-stone* of our building. That will be to us a most interesting day, a day most intimately connected, I trust, with the glory of our dear Redeemer and the salvation of thousands." Dr. Hallock proceeds to state that the $20,000 had been raised; the ground purchased for $16,000, opposite the Park and the City Hall; the building planned, parts of it to be rented as a sinking-fund ultimately to pay all arrears. "Bright however as our prospects now are," he adds, "there may be obstacles. We ought to expect them. I know not what they may be, but they may be best

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for us and for the ultimate prosperity of the Society. It is not time yet to have gained the victory; we are just setting out in the campaign; it is a war, in short, which must last *during life;* our rest is beyond the grave, and that rest will be glorious. It would be a shame to us to pass easily along with nothing to encounter, when the great Captain of our salvation endured all the agonies of the cross. He will doubtless lay the cross in our way, and we must carry it, and never lay it down."

"BOLTON, April 6, 1825.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—Your esteemed favor of the 3d instant has duly reached me. I have also one from our worthy brother in the Lord, William W. Chester, Esq., enclosing the circular of the national Tract Society, by which it appears that the officers are merely chosen to serve *provisoire* until delegates from the several tract societies in the United States shall assemble in New York on the 11th of May to elect the annual officers, and definitively organize the Society.

"God forbid that I, by declining the office of president until that time, should dampen the zeal, discourage the efforts of its friends, and prove an icicle to the establishment and progress of that infant institution. I have therefore resolved, unworthy and ill-qualified as I am for the performance of the responsible duties assigned me, to yield assent to the wishes of the friends of Zion, and submit my feeble services to their disposition on the highly

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interesting occasion of laying the corner-stone. Commending myself to an interest in their prayers, of which I have much need, for I do indeed feel that by thus assenting to preside on that important day I am called upon in a peculiar manner to take up my cross.

"In love to the Saviour I salute you,

"S. V. S. WILDER.

"P. S. God willing, I will meet you in New York the first week in May. In the mean time I should esteem it a particular favor if you could visit me here, as I consider it very important that measures should be taken to engage an elder brother, the American Tract Society at Boston, to a union previous to the meeting at New York. I leave here day after to-morrow for a meeting of trustees to organize Amherst College, but by leave of Providence shall return here by the 22d instant. As it is so important, according to friend Chester's letter, that the president of the national institution should be from New England, I exceedingly regret you had not made choice, in the *first place*, of the Hon. Samuel Hubbard—perhaps it is not yet too late."

The convention of delegates from tract societies was held May 10, 1825, the Rev. Dr. Milnor presiding; the Rev. John Summerfield, who closed his brilliant public labors in the formation of this Society, being a delegate from the Baltimore Branch. The Constitution was agreed on, and the officers

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and the Executive Committee of the National Society nominated with delightful unanimity; and all arrangements made for the public meeting to organize the Society on the following day, and from that meeting to proceed to lay the corner-stone of the Society's house; on which occasions Mr. Wilder delivered the two following brief addresses, at the close of the first of which he struck the key-note to which the Publishing Committee have aimed, that every book, tract, and handbill bearing the imprint of the American Tract Society should be attuned.

"The object, my Christian friends, which has this day brought us together, is the more complete organization and establishment of a National Tract Society; and whether we look for encouragement in such an enterprise to what has already been achieved by similar institutions, or to the very favorable auspices under which this is beginning its existence, or to the effect to be produced by it on the eternal interests of thousands and tens of thousands of our immortal fellow-beings, we have abundant cause of gratitude to God for the motives which should inspirit our efforts, and for the prospects that should gladden and sustain our labors.

"Having been permitted, in the providence of God, to witness the impressions made upon the moral and religious character of man by the exertions of such societies in various parts of the European continent, accomplishing, under the most humble form and in the most unobtrusive way, what the boasted lights of philosophy and the splendid ma-

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chinery of political institutions could not effect, I have had an opportunity of testing the value of tracts, in a way calculated to fill me with admiration and astonishment, at the energy of that Spirit of grace and truth which, through such humble instruments, can produce the renovation of minds shrouded in the deepest gloom of ignorance and superstition.

"But I must leave to others, better qualified than myself to do it, to lay before you more at length the good which we hope to accomplish, under the blessing of God, by the concentrated efforts of those Christians of various denominations who have united in the formation of this Society, a Society which, permit me to say, affords me this day the enjoyment of what I have, amid other similar scenes while at a distance from my beloved country, considered as one of the sweetest consolations of my life—the privilege of forgetting that Christians can be called by different names, and of hailing as brethren in Christ Jesus all who bear his image on their hearts and devote their lives to his service.

"Indulge me, before I conclude, with one simple request. It is that the Publishing Committee would ever bear in mind the high responsibility of their office, and always feel that, as the eternal destinies of souls may hang upon their deliberations and doings, *no tract should ever be issued from the depository of this Society which does not contain—should it find its way where a Bible was never seen nor the gospel ever*

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heard—enough of divine truth to guide the ignorant and the inquiring sinner into the path of eternal life."

In *laying the corner-stone,* Mr. Wilder said,

"We enjoy this day, my friends, one of the most exalted privileges which this age of benevolent exertion affords—the privilege of commencing a work which has for its object the best, the eternal interests of our fellow-men. We are not indeed assembled to lay the foundation of some splendid edifice, the pride of a city,* or a commonwealth, in which statesmen convene to devise and form those political institutions whose aim reaches not beyond the sphere of our temporal existence; nor of some misshapen pile, whose rude exterior presents a strange contrast to the fascinating embellishments within that seduce into a forgetfulness of their eternal destiny the sons and daughters of gayety and fashion, and lead them to waste, in worse than idle amusement, the fleeting hours which are allowed them to prepare for what awaits them beyond the grave; nor of those buildings of bustle and business, where mammon furnishes his followers with the means of adding a little more to those possessions from which the hand of death will soon quite remove them; but we are assembled, by the blessing of God, to place here the corner-stone of an edifice which claims as its highest honor to be auxiliary to that noble one yonder, from which emanate, as from a fountain of light and life, the sacred oracles of truth. For the universal influence of these oracles throughout our common country, and to the remotest regions of the earth, we trust this edifice will tend to prepare the way.

"The instruments indeed which it proposes to furnish for so momentous an object are humble ones, but, in the hand of God, they can become mighty for the accomplishment of his gracious designs; and could our eyes now behold the thousands of immortal souls who, through the atoning sacrifice of a crucified Redeemer, owe their robes of triumph and their

* The Society's house was located within a few rods of the City Hall, the theatre, and the house of the American Bible Society.

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seats of bliss in heaven to the influence of these silent messengers of divine truth, and the thousands more of our fellow-men who, from the same source, have derived all their hopes of an interest in Jesus Christ, we should see an assembly of redeemed spirits whose numbers would furnish motives the most powerful of which we can conceive, to invigorate our faith and animate our efforts in this glorious work—glorious, not because we are engaged in it, for we are but the weak instruments through which the Saviour of men condescends to perfect his work of redeeming love, but glorious because its results are to establish his empire upon the ruins of error and sin and wretchedness, and to extend it in the world to come with all its scenes of ineffable holiness and happiness through the countless ages of eternity.

"While we thus place the corner-stone which will serve to uphold this edifice, angels, we may believe, contemplate with joy and admiration our labors of love. Generations yet unborn will raise their songs of praise to the great I AM for the blessings which the enterprise of this hour may be instrumental in procuring for perishing millions."

Mr. Wilder fulfilled the duties of President of the American Tract Society with great fidelity for seventeen years. He presided at every anniversary during that time; and often, while resident in New York and Brooklyn, attended the meetings and took part in the deliberations of the Executive Committee. On the approach of every anniversary he called at Dr. Hallock's office, and they mutually led in a season of private and humble prayer that God would be present by his Spirit and guide and bless the Society in all its labors and interests.

The opening addresses delivered by him at the Society's successive anniversaries show how carefully he watched over and guarded its progress and

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interests, and that much thought and labor were expended by him in its behalf. Brief selections only can be given. At the first annual meeting he said,

"The recurrence of this anniversary, my Christian friends, should excite within our breasts the liveliest emotions of gratitude to Almighty God for the kind care with which his fostering providence has watched over our humble efforts. Twelve months ago we commenced our enterprise, without any definite agreement with regard to the particular tracts that we should publish, with no pecuniary resources for printing, and without any convenient accommodations for the prosecution of our object; and now what a different aspect of affairs are we permitted to witness. Well may we exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!' One hundred and eighty-five evangelical tracts have been sanctioned by our Publishing Committee with the most delightful unanimity, and about seven hundred thousand copies printed.

"The building, of which we then laid the corner-stone, has, by the blessing of God and through the liberality of the friends of Zion in this city, been erected, and under such prudent and economical arrangements as not only to afford suitable accommodations for the business of the Society, but also to yield a considerable sum annually to its resources; and a general spirit of coöperation has been so extensively diffused throughout our country, that we have every reason to hope that, with a continuance of the same divine blessing, our future efforts, thus happily begun, will bear some proportion to the extent and magnitude of the spiritual wants of those whom they are intended to relieve. The measures which have been adopted by our Secretary and Executive Committee to make known the existence of this Society, to excite a permanent interest in its object, to augment the number of its members, to increase its revenue by the establishment of auxiliaries, to procure correspondents and effective agents for sale and distribution, prove that nothing has been omitted which zeal could suggest or assiduity accomplish for extending the benefits of the institution.

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"You will see by the Report to be laid before you, that since the organization of this Society, it has had the satisfaction of numbering among its coadjutors several of the most respectable societies of a similar kind in the United States; and we cannot but indulge the hope that, when the object of our association and the principles on which it is to be conducted are fully known, and the advantages of such an engine of doing good fully appreciated, all local and sectional feelings will yield to the more noble and generous impulse of combining the united resources of the friends of Christ throughout our country in one great, undivided effort to bring within his fold all who are yet wandering from him in the ways of transgression and ruin.

"The Saviour whom we acknowledge predicted that when lifted up on the cross he would draw all men unto him. Do we not already see the breaking twilight of that millennial morn? Are not the evangelical institutions which characterize the present age propitious tokens of its coming? And what a privilege do we who are here assembled enjoy, in being permitted to bear a subordinate part in its advancement."

"But two years have elapsed since the organization and establishment of this Society, yet its progress and success have surpassed what its most zealous advocates had dared to anticipate. During the past year especially has the blessing of Almighty God seemed to attend its operations. Its friends have increased in number, its object has been better understood and more extensively appreciated, its resources have been enlarged, its sphere of usefulness has been widened, and the numerous demands made upon it—indeed much greater than it could meet—from various parts of our own and of other countries, indicate in the most satisfactory manner the estimation in which its design is held, and the vast extent of good which it may be the means of accomplishing. I say all this not to foster vanity or encourage presumption, but to inspire confidence, to enliven hope, to quicken exertion, and above all, my Christian friends, to excite in our breasts the warmest emotions of gratitude to God our Sav-

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iour, who condescends to employ us in this delightful service, and who crowns our labors, feeble and unworthy as they are, with his divine blessing. To him, and to him alone, be all the praise.

"Our labors are but just begun. Every step that we advance discovers to us a wider and wider field of operation. Our resources, our plans, our efforts must keep pace with this discovery; and much as we have reason to rejoice in the retrospect, it is to what lies before us that I would rouse the attention of every friend of tracts throughout our whole country."

"Since the lapse of twelve months, we behold with wonder and adoration the wide field which the Lord has opened before us for the distribution of tracts among the *four millions in the destitute valley of the Mississippi*, and we rejoice to reflect on the blessed fruit which may spring up in those regions into everlasting life.

"I congratulate the Society on the increasing evidence of every year that the support rendered to this institution and to kindred bodies is grounded on an enlightened conviction of the duty and the happiness of contributing to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom throughout the world.

"What remains but that, girding ourselves afresh to conflict and to toil, we invoke, without ceasing, the especial influences of that divine Spirit who alone can make our conflict victorious and our toil successful? Let us be encouraged, from the past, to persevere for the future. And let us be assured that the Holy Spirit will, in answer to the prayer of faith, be poured out from on high, the wilderness of the world become a fruitful field, and the whole earth see and rejoice in the salvation of God."

"That the friends and laborers of *monthly tract distribution* are increasing all over our country is a subject of joy and devout thanksgiving, and we cannot but indulge the exhilarating hope that in the course of the present year these systematic efforts will extend and be carried into effect in every city, village, and town throughout our Union. In the further

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prosecution of the work in which we are engaged, it will be important to bear in mind the duty of perseverance, both as its regards the augmentation of funds and the full accomplishment of the Society's object.

"The departure of our worthy colleague, *Rev. Dr. Milnor*, the Chairman of our Executive Committee, to represent this and kindred societies at the religious *anniversaries in London and Paris*, will be hailed by every friend of Zion as a most auspicious event; and if the prayers of a whole community prevail, this devoted ambassador of our Lord Jesus Christ will be sustained by the grace of God in the discharge of the responsible duties assigned him, and in due time return in safety to his country, his family, and his beloved people, in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace."

"At a time like the present," 1831, "when the rays of salvation from the Sun of righteousness are striking simultaneously, as it were, on the principal cities and villages of our Union, and we behold the wondrous display of the power and grace of God in the conviction and conversion of sinners, I should lose sight of an important duty, did I not begin by inviting the members of the American Tract Society, and every friend of Zion here present, to concur with me in acknowledging our renewed obligations to God for the blessings with which he has been pleased to crown the labors of our institution.

"Never, my Christian friends, have I come before you with such a deep sense of obligation and unfeigned gratitude to God as on the present auspicious occasion. When we reflect on the blessed effects which have been produced during the present glorious revivals on the hearts of impenitent sinners through the instrumentality of these silent messengers of divine truth, should not emotions of gratitude to the great Giver of success pervade all hearts, and a new and invigorated purpose of future action be implanted in every breast?

"Much remains yet to be done for millions of our fellow-men, not only in our own beloved country, but in heathen lands; and it is an awful and impressive consideration, that

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of those millions many are daily hastening to the retributions of eternity, ignorant of a Saviour, ignorant of the way of salvation through his atoning sacrifice, and ignorant of every thing which pertains to their peace.

"Oh, my Christian friends, let me entreat of you, before we proceed to the duties assigned us, to unite with me for a moment in silent prayer, that the divine influences of the Holy Spirit may descend and rest on each individual that is to address this meeting, that in all our deliberations and doings this day a solemnity may prevail such as has never before been witnessed on a similar occasion."

"Allow me just to advert to the place wherein we are assembled"—1833, at the Chatham-street Chapel, late Chatham Theatre—"a place which has long been under the dominion of the prince of darkness, and until a few weeks since was a scene of vice and dissipation, and which has seduced into a forgetfulness of their eternal destiny thousands of the sons and daughters of gayety and fashion, and led them to waste, in worse than idle amusements, the fleeting hours allowed them to prepare for what awaits them beyond the grave. When we contemplate this edifice, now transformed into a beautiful temple consecrated to the worship of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we cannot but exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!' In view of this fact, should not emotions of gratitude to the great Giver of success pervade all hearts, and a new and invigorated purpose of future action be implanted in every breast?"

"We cannot but feel grateful to that Providence whose power directs all human events, for allowing us the privilege and enjoyment of beholding among our number on this auspicious occasion," 1834, "the two reverend gentlemen, Rev. Andrew Reed and Rev. James Matheson, who, as delegates from the Congregational churches in England, have come, as we trust, to invigorate the faith and animate the efforts of American Christians; and we indulge the exhilarating hope that the visit of these distinguished brethren will not only tend to draw still closer those endearing ties of Christian affec-

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tion which so happily subsist between the two nations, but will essentially contribute to the hastening on of that glorious day when the triumphs of the cross over superstition, error, and infidelity shall extend throughout our globe, and when it shall be universally proclaimed, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.'"

In November, 1830, Mr. Wilder, exclusive of his other donations, sent to the American Tract Society one hundred dollars, in part of eight hundred which was raised for stereotyping and perpetuating Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. This was at about the commencement of the volume enterprise.

About this time also, writing from Bolton, he took great interest in having Dr. Milnor, Chairman of the Publishing Committee, furnished with suitable letters in view of a visit to Europe, and in "forming a purse of at least one thousand dollars to defray the doctor's expenses;" to which, through a mutual friend, Arthur Tappan, Esq., he desired to contribute his share, but which gift was courteously declined.

In 1842 he tendered the following resignation of the presidency of the institution.

"BOLTON, April 27, 1842.

"REV. JAMES MILNOR, D. D., Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Tract Society:

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—Composed as the American Tract Society is of several denominations of evangelical Christians, and having occupied for a longer period than I had ever contemplated the responsible station to which the indulgent feelings of its various members have from year to year unanimously elected me, I had resolved two years since, from a desire to conform to the equitable principle of rotation in

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office, as well as in accordance with my own wishes and a sense of duty, to resign the office I hold as President of your Society, in order to afford an opportunity to some one of another denomination, more able and better qualified than myself to discharge its appropriate duties.

"But motives of a personal consideration, arising from my attachment to the worthy colleagues with whom I have had the peculiar privilege of being associated in the tract cause for more than one fourth of my unprofitable life, and a desire still to contribute my feeble efforts to promote the great and glorious objects of our institution in any station which its friends might assign me, induced me again to yield an assent to a reëlection the last two years.

"Impressed with a conviction that every earthly occurrence coöperates, directly or indirectly, to the accomplishment of the wise designs of that gracious Being whose power directs and governs all events, I bow with submission to his sovereign will in the revulsion which in his providence has taken place in my pecuniary position, and which, as it involves the uncertainty of my future residence in your city, clearly indicates the propriety and expediency of my now resigning the office I have so long held as President of the American Tract Society. In thus retiring from the duties and responsibilities of this distinguished station in your Society, and in taking a retrospective view of the progress and signal success which has attended its operations thus far, I cannot but exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!'

"Permit me however, on this occasion, to express my grateful acknowledgments to those zealous colleagues who have so ably, so cheerfully, so unremittingly, and so successfully discharged the arduous duties of their respective departments in the transactions of our Society during the seventeen years of its existence. This is their just due; but I do believe, and I appeal to you, reverend sir, for the correctness of my assertion, that their highest reward is the consoling reflection which they may cherish, that with sincerity, though with many imperfections, they have been the favored instruments in the hands of God of doing something to promote the best, the eternal interests of their fellow-men.

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"Such is the mutability of human events, that since the formation of our Society we have been called, in the providence of God, to mourn the loss of several distinguished and devoted friends and patrons of our institution. Some of these were united to us by the strongest ties of Christian affection; who manifested a lively interest in the success of our enterprise, who aided us with means, and always cheered us with their presence at our anniversaries; but they 'rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.'

"May we all be admonished by these dispensations of Providence that in a few short years, not only those who have devoted themselves to the benevolent objects of our Society, but those for whose more immediate benefit they were undertaken, will all be overshadowed by that night in which no man can work. This awful consideration appeals most powerfully to the feelings and principles, the benevolence and piety, of every friend of tracts, to work while the day lasts, and thereby contribute more effectually to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom throughout our world. Could our eyes now behold the thousands of immortal souls who, through the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer, owe their robes of triumph and their seats of bliss in heaven to the influence of tracts, and the thousands more of our fellowmen who, from the same source, have derived all their hopes of an interest in Jesus Christ, we should see an assembly of redeemed spirits whose number would furnish motives the most powerful of which we can conceive to invigorate our faith and animate our efforts in this glorious work.

"With these views and feelings, it remains only to offer my devout supplications to Almighty God, that he will perfect the work which he has so abundantly prospered; that the zeal which he has inspired may never relax, until the glad tidings of salvation by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit shall have been communicated to every inhabitant of the globe, and the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

"Allow me in conclusion, reverend and dear sir, to assure you and my highly respected colleagues of my entire persuasion that, if the same reliance on divine aid, the same delight-

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ful unanimity of religious sentiment, and the same harmony of action which have thus far characterized all our proceedings shall continue, by the grace of God, to prevail in your future deliberations and doings, an impulse will eventually be given to the tract cause which shall continue to exert an increasing influence, until its beneficial effects shall be recognized and appreciated by the latest generations.

"And now, venerable sir, in commending myself to your prayers, and the beloved institution with which we have been so long connected to the special blessing of God our Saviour, I bid you and our dear associates an affectionate farewell.

"With our hopes founded on the promises of the gospel, our conduct regulated by its precepts and principles, imbibing more and more of its benevolent and peaceful spirit, neither shrinking from the cross nor becoming weary in well-doing, let us look forward to a more perfect society in heaven, where a more than earthly union shall be the bond, love the inspiring motive, and praise the everlasting theme. Once more, highly respected sir, I bid you one and all a final, affectionate farewell.

"S. V. S. WILDER."

The Society, through its Secretary, replied:

"NEW YORK, May 13, 1842.

"RESPECTED AND DEAR SIR—I hasten to state that your communication, announcing that your connection with the American Tract Society as its President must now be closed, was duly received and read by our Executive Committee, and that it was by them referred to the Society.

"'It has been made the duty of the Committee,' they say in their Annual Report, 'to state that the esteemed President who, from the foundation of the Society, has so acceptably presided over its counsels, and whose cordial friendship to its best interests those most familiar with all the transactions of the Society best know, has tendered his resignation of the presidency in a communication which will be herewith submitted.'

"Mr. Crosby was called to the chair, and after prayer by

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Dr. Spring, your communication was read by Dr. Milnor, and will be inserted on the engrossed minutes of the meeting and in the Annual Report. At the close of the reading of the letter, the Society, on motion of Dr. Milnor, unanimously

"'*Resolved*, That the resignation of President Wilder be accepted, and that the respectful acknowledgments of this Society be presented to him for the zeal and liberality manifested by him in its original organization, the continued interest he has taken in its concerns throughout its successful progress, and especially for the dignity, kindness, and ability with which he has fulfilled his official duty as President of the institution.'

"We had one of the best and largest meetings we have ever been favored with by Him who orders all events; and at the close, in accordance with your own suggestion, *Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen* was unanimously elected President. Dr. Alexander of Princeton was also elected a member of the Publishing Committee.

"Such, in reference to yourself, are the mysterious ways of Providence, rupturing some of the most tender ties that ever vibrated in my heart, and most unexpectedly dissolving in form, not in affection, nor in the interest which we know you will cherish in this cause till called to the immediate presence of Christ, those bonds which I supposed would continue probably after I should cease my feeble endeavors, and till you should have been called to exchange the toils and trials of life for the praises of heaven.

"May God give us *faith* enough in *eternal* realities to make us feel that 'the Judge of all the earth doeth right,' and that though 'no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous,' yet all the dealings of his paternal hand 'shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' May he sanctify all these strange events to us all, by them purify and prepare us for his kingdom, and at last permit us together to cast our crowns at his feet, and rejoice with those who have been and shall be won to him by our feeble instrumentality, in his presence for ever.

"Your affectionate brother in Christ,

"W. A. HALLOCK, Cor. Sec."

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This resignation of its presidency did not affect Mr. Wilder's untiring interest in the American Tract Society. In all its trials, in all the work too so unexpectedly brought to it by our soldiers and for the freedmen, he sympathized, still attending its anniversaries, and occasionally having seasons of prayer in its behalf with its senior Secretary, watching thereunto with thanksgiving for its every success. In all his "dear colleagues," as he would call them, Rev. Ornan Eastman, Rev. R. S. Cook, and others on various committees, he took more than a mere friendly interest; cordially welcoming also to the work of the Society the Rev. Dr. Stevenson.

But its fortieth anniversary came, and "he was not there." In a true sense, "he had risen" to where, in the light of eternity, the paramount importance of work such as the American Tract Society seeks to accomplish is alone fully revealed.

Very touching were the allusions made to Mr. Wilder at this meeting by its President, Bishop McIlvaine, and by Dr. Jonas King; and its Annual Report embodied the following succinct account of his life, also widely published in the American Messenger.

"The recent departure of the venerated first President of the American Tract Society, SAMPSON VRYLING STODDARD WILDER, at the ripe age of almost eighty-five years, suggests illustrations of divine providence and grace of no common interest. The period of his youth was the darkest in our country's religious history, near the close of the last century; and he was surrounded by a dead formality, which at length sank into open denial of 'the Lord that bought us;' his early

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manhood was also passed amid the gay fascinations of the city of Paris; and yet, at the age of forty-five, on the formation of the national Tract Society at New York in 1825, all eyes were directed to him as a highly evangelical layman, of world-wide sympathies and relations, eminently fitted to preside over its counsels.

"He was born near his late residence in Bolton, Mass., May 20, 1780. His prayerful maternal grandmother Vryling was a Huguenot of Holland, rich in the orthodox faith; and while a merchant's clerk he was one of a class of young men who on Saturday evenings came under the careful evangelical instructions of the late Rev. Dr. Morse of Charlestown.

"Entering into business in Boston, he was sent out, at the age of twenty-three, to purchase goods in Paris, where for twenty years he became the successful agent and partner of large mercantile houses in Boston and New York, visiting this country from time to time as business required, thus making sixteen voyages across the Atlantic. Though few men have lived who had more fascinating personal attractions, a greater flow and geniality of spirit, or keener susceptibility to the more refined pleasures and enjoyments of life, yet he was guided, as by an unseen hand, in a course of temperance and sobriety in the midst of profusion; and among his dearest friends and associates were many of the most distinguished Christians of the age.

"In 1816, having business in London, he passed one evening a small church, and entering it, found himself in a missionary meeting with Rev. George Burder, Winter, and their compeers, who had started the benevolent movements of this century, a scene which deeply affected his heart. As he occupied a retired seat, the collection-plate did not reach him, but he found means to drop into it a £10 note, which led these friends to seek his acquaintance and introduce him to Christians of London, and among them the officers of the British Bible and Tract Societies. Being asked if tracts could be circulated in Paris, he at once directed £10 worth to be sent to his address in that city. The enormous box arrived at the custom-house, and being seized as contraband, he was

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summoned by the police to account for the crime, when he averred that there was nothing in them political or revolutionary, and presented a copy to each one present for his perusal. He thus found himself somewhat suddenly enlisted in the tract, Bible, and missionary work, and became a correspondent and personal friend of British Christians.

"Returning to the United States in 1814, and forming a happy connection in marriage, he purchased his commodious mansion and grounds of six hundred acres in Bolton as a permanent abode. But Providence had other designs for him. He was again called to Paris on business; and it is remarkable that in 1817, just as the ship was leaving New York, he stepped into the office of Zechariah Lewis, Esq., then Secretary of the New York Religious Tract Society, and gave him an order on his agent for $50 a year for five years, to circulate tracts in French and Spanish. From that date he resided in Paris with his family for six years, perhaps the most eventful period of his life. The choicest evangelical influences here flowed in upon him. His hospitable house and sumptuous board became the home of eminent Christians of Great Britain and other lands, bringing him spiritual blessings a thousand-fold in return. He was the medium of intercourse between British and American Christians and those of the Continent, especially Switzerland, where he himself made a delightful visit to Drs. Malan, Merle d'Aubigné, and their associates.

"Thus, by the providence and grace of God, was Mr. Wilder fitted for the presidential chair he was to occupy. Having returned in 1823 to his mansion in Bolton, a retired and wealthy merchant, he was asked to accept the presidency of the American Tract Society; but declined, as unworthy of the station, enclosing $500 towards erecting the Society's house. He at last accepted the appointment, presided at the Society's organization, and laid the corner-stone of its commodious edifice.

"His address on taking the chair comprised only four brief paragraphs, but they were highly appropriate, and rich in their evangelical bearing. The first congratulates those assembled on the object before them, 'the establishment of

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a national Tract Society, for the eternal interests of thousands and tens of thousands of our immortal fellow-beings.' The second referred to the encouragements derived from the blessings he had witnessed on such exertions in the old world. The third expressed his joy in 'the concentrated efforts of Christians of various denominations—one of the sweetest consolations of his life—the privilege of forgetting that Christians can be called by different names, and of hailing as brethren in Christ Jesus all who bear his image on their hearts, and devote their lives to his service.' The fourth was in these memorable words:

"'Indulge me with one simple request. It is that the Publishing Committee would ever bear in mind the high responsibility of their office; and always feel that, as the eternal destinies of souls may hang on their deliberations and doings, no tract should ever be issued from the depository of this Society which does not contain, should it find its way where the Bible was never seen nor the gospel ever heard, enough of divine truth to guide the ignorant and the inquiring sinner into the path of eternal life.'

"Mr. Wilder presided at sixteen successive anniversaries, previous to every one of which he called on the Secretary, and they held a season of united prayer for the divine guidance and blessing. He often cheered the meetings of the Executive Committee by his presence and counsels, and did much to give efficiency to the Society's labors at home and abroad. He loved the institution, and was greatly beloved; and though he resigned the presidency in 1842, he was present at every anniversary when he was in or near the city, never faltering in his attachment to a work so near his heart.

"About 1828 Mr. Wilder erected near his residence 'The Hill-side Church, for the worship of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' the history of which forms an interesting volume, and which was his crowning effort for the spiritual good of the region of his nativity.

"In 1830 he removed to New York, and for many years exerted a very prominent influence in the financial world as a banker, in connection with the celebrated house of Hottingeurs in Paris, and later with the Bank of the United States.

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But the day of revulsion came. The National Bank itself vanished away. In 1841 he retired to private life; and notwithstanding many remonstrances, resigned not only the presidency of the Tract Society, but more than twenty other offices he held in various kindred institutions, in which he was highly esteemed.

"In 1852 he moved to Elizabeth, N. J., and enjoyed a calm and quiet retreat from business near his esteemed son-in-law, R. T. Haines, Esq., spending his summers at White Lake, Sullivan county, N. Y., where at seventy-seven he wrote seventy-seven valuable maxims for his grandsons, which have just been printed. His health remained firm much beyond the age of fourscore; but a paralytic affection terminated his useful life March 3, 1865, at the age of nearly eighty-five. His trust solely in the merits of his crucified divine Redeemer was firm and unwavering; and all, to his closing hour, was in beautiful consistency with his entire consecration to Him he had so long delighted to serve.

"Three highly interesting permanent tracts, drawn chiefly from the lips of Mr. Wilder by Rev. Mark Wilks and Drs. Edwards and Hallock, perpetuate the history of his successful and almost romantic labors of love in various spheres of action. One of these is 'The Village in the Mountains,' No. 193, depicting his visits in the interior of France, especially among those he employed in silk-weaving and other manufactures. Another is 'The Only Son,' No. 530, showing his connection with Dr. Jonas King while he resided in Paris, where they established the Monthly Concert of Prayer before Dr. King entered on his mission to Western Asia, and Mr. Wilder's kind and romantic visit, on his return to this country, to Dr. King's aged parents. The third is 'The Well-conducted Farm,' No. 176, giving the history of Mr. Wilder's introduction of temperance among the laborers on his homestead. These tracts present vivid views of his ceaseless activity, buoyancy of spirit, adaptation to the character and wants of all classes of men, kindness, generosity, and genuine goodwill, which no summary description of the charm and loveliness of his character can adequately convey."

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XVI.

We ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel. Ezra 4 : 3.

Always abounding in the work of the Lord. 1 Cor. 15 : 58.

THERE is a grandeur and simplicity in the *Bible cause*, from its intrinsic worth and the interest in it perhaps inseparable from true Christian character, which distinguishes it from every other means of spreading the gospel.

Mr. Wilder, as an enlightened citizen, much more as a Christian, could not fail to take a part in the circulation of the Bible. But his interest in it amounted to more than this. To those who knew him best did the vein of attachment to it, running through his life, constantly appear. In view of any unnecessary expenditure, he would say, "Wait till all the world is supplied with Bibles." In personal distribution of the Scriptures, it has been seen, he early took an active part even before the formation of the Paris Bible Society. How in that society he was appreciated may be seen in a letter from its Secretary, Baron de Staël, dated Paris, April 20, 1823, to the American Bible Society.

"Our excellent friend Mr. Wilder will soon revisit his native shores, and we cannot sufficiently

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express how deeply his absence will be felt by all who witnessed his indefatigable zeal for the promotion of true Christianity in this country. But if any thing can lessen our regret, it is the confidence that Mr. Wilder's stay among his countrymen will lead to a more and more evangelical union between the good men on both sides of the Atlantic, and secure to us the continuance of your kindness and benevolence, than which no human reward can be a more welcome recompense for our feeble labors.

"With the highest regard and most fraternal attachment, we remain, sir,

"Your most obedient humble servants.

"A. STAËL, SECRETARY."

In 1821, Mr. Wilder spoke at the anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, congratulating them "upon the growing successes of their institution, an institution he considered the crowning glory of the British nation." He was for a time the chief channel of communication between the three Bible societies of England, America, and France, transmitting aid from the two former to their younger sister.

In a letter to Rev. Dr. James Milnor, then Foreign Secretary of the American Bible Society, dated Paris, Jan. 15, 1821, Mr. Wilder says, "Since our first Report, we have enlisted in our glorious work men who, not long since, were fighting the battles of their country, and who having, as I trust, put on the shield of the Spirit, are now zealously engaged

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in fighting the battles of their Lord and Saviour, by becoming active members of our Committee, and by personally contributing to the dissemination of that sacred volume which contains the records of eternal life."

Again, March 18, 1822, Mr. Wilder writes to Mr. Nitchie of the Bible Society,

"Be assured, dear sir, that it will always afford me peculiar pleasure to assist, by every means and in any degree, the sacred relations which unite in one bond of Christian brotherhood the friends of the Bible Societies of America and France. Though called by Providence to reside in the metropolis of France, I am not less in heart a citizen of the United States; nor can I contemplate my native country as holding the second rank among the nations of the world in the glorious cause of the distribution of the sacred Scriptures without the liveliest emotions of affectionate attachment. That the progress of the American Bible Society during the past year should have been evident, does not surprise me; it is the cause of God in which it is embarked, and there is no doubt but its labors and success, with those of similar institutions, will continue to increase till the divine promises shall be fulfilled, and 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'

"As it always happens too in similar cases, so in this country the leaven works and spreads its enlivening influence; kindred institutions for tracts, schools, and other Christian and philanthropic ob-

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jects are rising up around the Bible Society, and we may confidently hope that the thousands of prayers offered up in France by the devoted servants of Christ of former times, will return in showers of blessings on this and succeeding generations.

"I salute you in love to our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and remain, dear sir,

"Your most obedient,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

In Mr. Wilder's speech before the American Bible Society in 1824, he mentioned the following facts, in connection with remarks upon the fleeting and evanescent nature of all worldly grandeur and distinction.

As an officer in the Paris Bible Society, the duty at one time devolved upon him of introducing to a member of the British Parliament Count General Rapp, the last survivor of the principal officers of Napoleon, and who was then vice-president of the society. In performing this task, he repeated the titles by which the count was recognized. Immediately after the introduction, the count drew him aside, and begged of him, if he ever again had occasion to perform the like duty, to omit the mention of those empty distinctions, and simply to announce him as Vice-president of the Paris Bible Society; "for," said he, "of all the titles and honors I have borne, none at this moment yields me such high and solid satisfaction as that."

Mr. Wilder further said that he had so often heard objections to giving to so many institutions, that he would take the liberty to mention an incident. When residing in the city of Paris, as he was one morning engaged in opening his letters, a person was shown into his office, who presented a subscription paper for some local Bible society; but thinking

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that he had done his part in the parent institution, he at first objected. Being urged however, he put down his name for one hundred francs, and proceeded to read his letters, in one of which he was informed that a vessel in which he was concerned, and which was bound to this port, had been lost on the Jersey shore. In order to "lay up" some of the "treasure" yet remaining to him, he immediately doubled his subscription.

In a day or two the agent called for the money; and it so happened that Mr. Wilder at the very time was again engaged in reading his letters, by one of which he received advices from this city that a second ship had arrived *safe*, and in consequence of the loss of the former vessel, goods had risen so much, that on this second cargo he realized more than double the amount he expected.

In a Bible address Mr. Wilder made this eloquent appeal:

"If in the course of our mortal pilgrimage we should meet any of our fellow-immortals who are careless and unconcerned with regard to their eternal peace, give them a Bible; the perusal of it will create in them a spirit of inquiry. If there be any who are building on a false foundation, give them a Bible; it will induce them to dig deep, and not to be satisfied until their building rests on the Rock of ages. If there be any who are lulled into a state of fatal security, give them a Bible. If there be any who are wrapped up in their own self-righteousness, give them a Bible; they will there learn that it is only through the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer that they can hope for salvation. If there be any who are secret or open opposers of divine truth, give them a Bible, and they will find

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that it is hard to kick against the pricks. If there be any who are perfectly satisfied with themselves while in a state of sin and unholiness, give them a Bible; it will show them the necessity of repentance and regeneration. If there are any whose hearts are pierced with the arrow of conviction, give them a Bible; it will teach them that 'there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby they must be saved,' but the name of Jesus Christ. If there be any who are almost persuaded to become Christians, give them a Bible; they will there learn that delays are dangerous, and that the Son of man cometh in an hour when they think not. If there be any who are anxiously inquiring what they shall do to be saved, give them a Bible, which will point them to 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' If there be any who are rejoicing in hope, give them a Bible; it will confirm their faith, strengthen their confidence in the promises of God, alleviate their sufferings on the bed of sickness, be their comfort and consolation at the hour of death, and serve as a theme of rejoicing during the endless ages of eternity. In short, sir, if among the thousands to whom the Bible is given, only one weary pilgrim of this earth should be refreshed, one sufferer relieved, one weak believer strengthened, one thoughtless sinner roused, one wanderer led back to the right way, one soul saved, who would not gladly coöperate in such a work, and cheerfully bestow his mite in its behalf?

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"In a few years, perhaps months, weeks, or days, we shall be called from all the scenes of usefulness and Christian benevolence which characterize and adorn the present age, to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Oh let us resolve, with the grace of God assisting us, to work while the day lasts, and not be weary in well-doing until every nation, every family, and every individual of our race shall be furnished with that sacred volume, which contains the records of eternal life."

Mr. Wilder was elected a member of the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society in May, 1831, which office he held till May, 1843, when he declined a reëlection.

In December, 1827, in reply to a communication from four ministers of Worcester county, Mass., Revs. John Nelson, Horatio Bardwell, Josiah Clarke, and Loammi I. Hoadley, Mr. Wilder proposed a special meeting of the friends of the Bible in that county, "with a view that, with the grace of God assisting, every destitute family in it should be supplied with a Bible before the expiration of the ensuing year." This was among the earlier efforts of the kind.

To his daughters and granddaughters, upon their marriage, Mr. Wilder presented each a large Family Bible, with essentially the same inscription on the fly-leaf:

"That the contents of this sacred volume may be your guide and comfort in life, your support and consolation at the great and eventful hour of death,

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and serve you as a theme of rejoicing during the endless ages of eternity, is the prayer of your affectionate father,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

For the work of *Foreign Missions* Mr. Wilder cherished a warm attachment, especially as carried forward by means of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Of this Board he was elected a corporate member at its annual meeting in September, 1823.

Before 1823, Mr. Wilder's known interest in Dr. Jonas King's movements, and in the Paris Missionary Society, had brought him into business relations with the friends of missions in this country. By request of the Prudential Committee, he had made inquiries for them in Paris about the casting of type in the Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Armenian, and Turkish characters, making such purchases as ordered. The letters regarding these commissions were written by Jeremiah Evarts, Esq., Secretary; with whom Mr. Wilder afterwards became intimately acquainted, and whose name he murmured with dying lips just before their blest reuniting above. With Dr. Cornelius also, and his much esteemed associates and successors, Drs. Anderson, Treat, Armstrong, and G. W. Wood, Mr. Wilder ever maintained the most friendly intercourse, extending far beyond mere official bounds.

After his return to this country he was from time to time appointed to attend local missionary

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meetings, as a delegate from the parent Society—a duty sometimes involving more than a week of service. Addresses made by him on some of these occasions show how deeply his heart was enlisted in the missionary work. At one of these he said,

"If the sight of this assembly, convened for such a purpose, tends to enkindle sentiments of devout wonder and gratitude, what, sir, should be our reflections when memory reviews the recollection of those who have left us here, in all the quiet and ease and plenty of our beloved homes, that they may toil in distant lands to carry your plans of benevolence into effect; bearing the brunt of the conflict, and often sinking and dying under the burden and heat of the day? Let us forget the little that we have done in the greatness of their labors. Let us on all proper occasions do what we can to assure them that they are bound to our hearts by the strongest ties of Christian esteem and love.

"And what, sir, are the privations which these missionaries experience, the sacrifices they make, the toils they endure? They are called upon to quit for ever that spot which is so dear to us all, which amid all our wanderings we can never forget, and which we revisit always to cherish there the purest, the tenderest recollections—home. The very word brings such a flood of emotions over my soul that I cannot find language to describe them. Of this home the missionary often takes a final farewell, never, never again to meet parents, brothers, sisters, friends; deprived of this solace—ah,

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what a sacrifice for a son, for a daughter to make—deprived of the privilege of consoling the declining years of a venerable father and mother, of sustaining them amid their increasing infirmities, of watching the pillow of their sickness, of ministering to them in the struggles of death.

"I have myself witnessed in a foreign land the intense agony of feeling which wrung the breast of one of our dear missionaries when this subject was presented to his mind; and I have seen in this country the corresponding yearnings of his aged and venerable parents over their beloved son, and the calm, the sweet submission too with which they surrender him to the service of God our Saviour. I found my way through drifts of snow to their lonely cottage. I had promised their son, God permitting, to see them. I knocked at their door, and on entering beheld the venerable father, bending beneath the weight of years and infirmity, seated by the fire. His aged partner was busy in domestic concerns. I was welcomed, though a stranger, to the comforts of their fireside. After a moment of silence, I observed that I once had a friend who, on being invited to take the place of a deceased missionary in Palestine, said to me, 'What shall I do?' Said I, 'Go.' 'But,' said he, 'what will become of my aged and infirm parents?' I replied that I would perform the duties of a son in his place. 'Then,' said he, 'I go up to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which may befall me there.' On hearing this, they immediately recognized me as the friend of their

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son, and loaded me with their expressions of friendship and their blessings. We united in prayer, and never shall I forget the fervent supplications of the father at the throne of grace, nor the devout gratitude that he expressed that God had made him the favored father of such a son. But I forbear to describe my parting with this father and mother in Israel; my feelings will not permit me to do it. The love between them and their son was strong as death. But such ties must be broken.

"The missionary leaves his home. He enters the bark which is soon to bear him to the scene of his future labors. But these labors are for the moment all forgotten. His soul is engrossed with the scene that is before him. He bids the circle of his friends farewell. He joins in the last prayer of theirs which he is ever to hear on this side the grave. The sweet tones of the missionary hymn die upon his ear. He catches the last glimpse of the indistinct forms of those whom he long esteemed and venerated and loved. They quite fade away. The dwellings of his native land are lost behind the wave; the distant hill-tops a little longer remain. He lingers and lingers to catch the last sight of their blue line above the horizon. They too at length are gone, and he stands in a maze of silent sorrow, as yet hardly sensible of the overwhelming reality, that between him and his country there is hereafter to be an almost impassable barrier. Now he has the untried perils of the deep to encounter, with perhaps a dear companion to sustain and

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soothe and succor, leaning on him as her only human stay amid the trials that await her. But time will not permit me to speak of these perils.

"Follow him to the place of his destination, in a land of strangers, ignorant of their language, their customs, their manners—every thing to learn, every thing to encounter. His great work is as it were again to be begun. He has now to gain upon the affections of the few who may be his friends, and to meet the machinations of the many who will prove his opposers; and so to demean himself as, if possible, to disarm hostility of any grounds of suspicion, and to secure the patronage of these individuals and, what is more difficult, of the government whose protection he seeks. What fortitude, what discretion, what zeal, what prudence, what meekness does such a novel and trying situation demand!

"Varieties of climate too, and modes of living, are not among the least of his difficulties: and has he offspring, how must his parental feelings yearn over them, when he considers how little time will be left him from his missionary duties to devote personally to their instruction, and how barren will be their advantages and how aggravated their temptations, compared with the lot of those youth who are growing up in his own highly favored land.

"Another may be destined to a longer pilgrimage before he finds the final scene of his labors. He may have to explore the wilds of the wilderness, or traverse the burning sands of the desert, or encounter the frosts of northern regions, exposed to

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the tomahawk of the Indian, the knife of the Turk, or the spear of the Arab. Amid toils like these, the missionary often finds his final conflict approaching, and without any of the last kind offices of friendship, alone in a land of strangers, resigns his spirit into the hands of that Saviour in whose service he has thus been so arduously and so faithfully engaged.

"In thus attempting, Mr. President, to describe some of the privations, sacrifices, and toils of the missionary, I have not dared to delineate those which are peculiar to that sex who, in the ardor of their attachment to Jesus Christ, have so heroically gone forth to be the companions of the heralds of his cross to heathen lands. Let an abler tongue than mine do them justice, or rather, let the mothers and daughters who hear me—let the fathers and brothers do them justice, for I am sure, sir, the strength of your emotions on a subject of such deep and tender interest would only be diminished by my feeble efforts. Who can but regard the privations, sacrifices, and toils of these our missionary brethren and sisters with the liveliest sympathy? Who can but implore upon them and their labors the divine protection and blessing? Who in this assembly can be unwilling to make corresponding sacrifices and efforts?

"Let us all feel that time is short, that life is uncertain, that an eternity awaits us, and that the primary object of our lives should be to promote, according to the means which Providence has placed

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in our hands, the building up of the Redeemer's kingdom upon the earth; and that in pursuance of this great object, we are under the highest obligation to make our exertions in some measure commensurate with those of the missionaries whom we have sent to devote themselves, their families, their time, their talents, their lives, their all to this great and glorious enterprise."

In another address Mr. Wilder said:

"Who can but indulge a delightful anticipation that the period is not far distant when the child, the parent, the citizen, the subject, the magistrate, the statesman, and kings and governors of the earth will all, all unite in the glorious employment of producing throughout the globe the complete influence of that gospel which proclaims 'peace on earth, and good will to men.'

"The friends and several of the members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions appear before you this evening to entreat your prayers, enlist your sympathies, and solicit your aid in behalf of six hundred millions of our fellow-men who are now sitting in the region of the shadow of death, ignorant of a Saviour, ignorant of the way of salvation through his atoning sacrifice, ignorant of every thing which pertains to their eternal peace; and I trust our appeal will not be made in vain, but that one and all will liberally and cheerfully respond according to the means which a benign Providence has placed at their disposition, and thus contribute to hasten on that glorious day when the knowledge

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of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea; when every nation and kindred and people and tongue shall bow to the gentle sceptre of the Lord Jesus Christ, and acknowledge him, as he is, God over all, blessed for ever."

Mr. Wilder at one time had plans for establishing *retreats* on a large scale for missionaries, and for the support and education of their children. Indeed this was a favorite scheme with him through life, and spoken of by him within a few days of his death. He felt the strong claims those sent out by the church, at a small compensation, into foreign lands, have for support in time of sickness or old age. The question, however, as to the advisableness of the asylums proposed was an open one. Many arguments were adduced pro and con. Mr. Wilder was never able to carry out his benevolent intentions in this direction. God in his providence took from him the power, but the subject had been of much interest to him in the prospect. Large architectural drawings remaining show how far the plan had advanced. The buildings, one in Gothic, the other in Grecian style, he had wished to have erected on his own home farm, devoted by him to that purpose. No doubt the Lord accepted the gift which the hands were never able to lay upon the altar.

Home missions were not forgotten by him, whose experience in foreign lands but bound him the more strongly to his own. Dr. Absalom Peters, Secre-

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tary of the American Home Missionary Society, seemed to turn confidently to Mr. Wilder for help in any emergency. Rev. Dr. Milton Badger, Secretary, writes, "Mr. Wilder was a member of the Convention that organized the Home Missionary Society in May, 1826, and was at that time elected one of its directors. In 1837 he was elected one of the vice-presidents of the Society, which office he held until his death. He was an early patron of the institution, deeply interested in the spread of that gospel which his life adorned. The executive officers of this Society, in common with those of many other charitable institutions, sympathize deeply with his afflicted family in their bereavement."

He was always ready, while he had the power, to assist *feeble churches* wherever situated. Nor were his charities in this line confined to his own denomination. Moravians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, all had a share in his benefactions. He loved the kingdom of Christ in all its departments. His large experience of practicable fellowship with Christians of various names seemed to raise him above mere denominational distinctions. Christian large-heartedness was in him a very prominent trait.

From Europe calls for help for feeble churches often came to Mr. Wilder, even after his final return to this country. Among the more interesting may be mentioned one from Voltaire-Ferney, Switzerland, once the abode of the bold, sophistical unbe-

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liever whose predictions were of the total downfall of Christianity within a hundred years. In the letter appealing for help for the church in Voltaire-Ferney, mention is made of a Bible Society recently formed there. This soon took for its head-quarters the very house once occupied by Voltaire himself, dispelling the momentary darkness of his incantations by the light of eternal truth.

This call for help from a church in Switzerland brings us to consider Mr. Wilder as connected with that society for the promotion of religion in Europe which has grown in this country as, in Scripture language, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The "French Committee" of 1831, in 1837 blossomed into the "Foreign Evangelical Association;" and in 1849, embracing two other societies, ripened into the "*American and Foreign Christian Union*," thus changing its organization and very name, with its three fold increase of labor—rather its three hundred-fold, as two or three hundred evangelical ministers are now to be found in France in place of the two or three of thirty years ago.

W. W. Chester, Esq., long Treasurer of this Society, says, "At the first anniversary meeting, May 8, 1838, S. V. S. Wilder, Chairman of the Executive Committee, presided, when a report was submitted, giving interesting details of its work in France, and of the action of Rev. Dr. Hawes, Rev. Samuel Green, and Rev. J. C. Brigham, which opened the

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way to Dr. Baird, who, as agent, resided three years in Paris."

Rev. Dr. Robert Baird, Mr. Wilder's endeared, constant friend, so unobtrusive, so quiet in manner, so persevering in effort, sympathizing deeply, through family association, with France and Europe, God seemed to have raised him up for a special work few others could have accomplished. In this work abroad it was natural that Mr. Wilder should take especial interest. "He was very influential in starting the project of operating in France."

Evangelical Christians in France and Switzerland do not seem at first to have fully understood the plans of their friends in America. They wrote to Mr. Wilder, not only as Chairman of the Executive Committee, but as the long-tried friend who was personally acquainted with them and their circumstances. He replied to them as follows:

"NEW YORK, Feb. 10, 1840.

"Reverend and highly honored and beloved brethren in Jesus Christ:

"I have received and read with deep and grateful interest your communication of the 20th of November last.

"You may well believe that such a communication from Christian friends so long known to me, and with most of whom it has been my privilege in former periods to be associated in so many labors of love, would excite within my bosom the most

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joyful sentiments. Excuse me, ancient colleagues, when I say your very names are dear to me, and the list of them appended to your communication reminded me of that glorious period when, if our faith fail not, we shall again unite and be for ever among that happy number whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

"Yes, beloved friends, the hours of Christian enjoyment with which I have been favored in your society will, I trust, be revived and renewed, purified, augmented, and perpetuated, when the different continents we now inhabit and the ocean that rolls between them shall pass away.

"I have entered into all your feelings in regard to the action of our Committee of the Foreign Evangelical Society, for I am fully aware of the obstacles with which you have to contend in the promulgation of evangelical truth, and I am persuaded that the course we have adopted for the accomplishment of the great object we all have in view and so ardently desire to promote, will, when rightly understood, be considered a wise course, and be approved by yourselves."

After explaining the views of the American Society, Mr. Wilder goes on to say,

"You will perceive by the Resolutions that the operations of our Corresponding Committee at Geneva are not designed to interfere with your own views; but we cherish the hope that the result of their deliberations will be such as to enkindle your zeal, animate your hopes, invigorate your faith, and

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stimulate your efforts in this great and glorious work.

"If harmonious action shall prevail, and we can each be favored with grace to be humble, prayerful, and faithful, an impulse will be given to the cause of evangelical truth in France which, through the all-powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, shall continue to spread throughout this and each succeeding generation, until its beneficial effects shall be recognized and appreciated amid the splendors of millennial glory.

"I take my leave of you, reverend and beloved friends, with great Christian affection. Our cause is one, our views are one, and our hearts are one. The God of peace be with and continue abundantly to bless you through time and eternity.

"S. V. S. WILDER."

A pleasant episode in Mr. Wilder's life was a visit made by him, with a few friends interested in the evangelization of the French, to Canada, in August, 1840, on occasion of the consecration of a Protestant mission house and chapel at *Grande Ligne*.

Mr. Wilder, by his genial humor; by his quickness to find new adventures, or readiness to relate those of the past; by trying his French tongue, now sometimes forgetful of a word, but never of the true Parisian accent, upon the Canadian peasantry; or by his apparently simple questioning of priest or nun, leading them on to unintentional revelations,

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added largely to the enjoyment of those favored as his companions on this northern trip.

To the "*American Education Society*" Mr. Wilder was a cordial contributor. Private assistance was also given by him to pious young men seeking preparation for the ministry.

Among other enterprises for the good of his country which Mr. Wilder was able to forward, that of the establishment of the *Hartford Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb*, as a first class, pioneer institution, must not be forgotten. Although not a Director in it until 1820, he had before then become much interested in its work, through its earnest, enthusiastic advocate, Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, D. D., who in 1816 brought letters of introduction to him in Paris, and whom he in turn introduced to the Abbé Sicard, who welcomed the young American to his school, and gave him every facility required. Mr. Wilder also, by his influence and advice, greatly aided in securing the services of Mr. Laurent Clerc. In 1819, more help in that line being needed, Mr. Wilder, then still in Paris, received a letter with full powers from the Directors of the Asylum, to procure for them another teacher from the same French institution of the Abbé Sicard, whose new modes of instruction for the deaf and dumb were considered much superior to those then in vogue in England.

In Dr. Gallaudet and S. V. S. Wilder, diverse in character, alike in feeling, kindred spirits met. The

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man of science, "his head teeming with various projects for the benefit and education of man," found an answering chord of sympathy in the breast of the large-hearted practical man of business. In love to Christ, in enlarged views of work to be done for him, the two coalesced. Their friendship became most intimate. A correspondence the most unrestrained was kept up between them for many years; and when worn by labor, Dr. Gallaudet took refuge in Mr. Wilder's hospitable mansion, where he was ever welcome. No one reading Dr. Gallaudet's letters of kind Christian counsel and encouragement to his friend to take a firm stand on the side of Christ, can fail to recognize one of the means used by our Lord to keep his servant in the right way.

The *Sabbath* Committee recently established in New York, in connection with their late Secretary, the Rev. R. S. Cook, have indeed done a noble work. Thirty years ago, and longer, Christian people in this country felt the necessity of bestirring themselves to secure the proper public observance of the Lord's day, and much good was then accomplished.

Mr. Wilder's views with regard to the observance of the Sabbath are thus related by Lewis Tappan, Esq., who was both director and owner in the factories concerned, and personally cognizant of the facts he has kindly furnished.

"Mr. Wilder, both at Ware and elsewhere, was a decided friend of the observance of the Christian Sabbath. His pre-

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decessor in the agency (in Ware village) had conformed to the prevailing custom of allowing repairs to be made on the Lord's day. Mr. Wilder set his face against this profanation, and resolved that, while he would aim to promote the interests of his employers, he would not neglect, nor suffer those under his authority to neglect their paramount obligations to God.

"On one occasion he was sorely tried. The great wheel, it was announced to him one Saturday afternoon, had become disabled. He sent for the Company's wheelwright, and asked him how long it would take to repair it. 'If I can take a gang of hands and work them on Sunday,' he said, 'I will engage to have the wheel in working order early on Monday morning.' 'Can't you accomplish the work without working on the Sabbath?' inquired Mr. Wilder. The wheelwright answered, 'It is impossible.' Mr. Wilder sent privately to a wheelwright who lived in the neighborhood, and who sympathized with him in religious matters. The question was put to him after he had examined the wheel. He said, 'It is a heavy job; but if you will let me have my own way, I will try and see what can be done.' Having full authority, he engaged several workmen, and set to work until midnight, resuming work just after midnight of the next day. Many of these workmen were religious men, who knew the state of the case, and they worked with a will, while the ungodly employées were chuckling at their anticipated triumph. But at eight o'clock on Monday morning, the usual hour for beginning work, the factory bell was rung as usual, summoning all hands to their posts; and the great wheel, fully repaired, began its accustomed revolutions.

"Such is one of my recollections of the venerable S. V. S. Wilder, with whom I have had many hours and days of pleasant intercourse, and who, I doubt not, has entered into the joy of his Lord.

"LEWIS TAPPAN."

In the later work of his friend Rev. R. S. Cook in behalf of the Sabbath, as well as in that he accomplished for colportage, and other departments

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of the American Tract Society's labors, Mr. Wilder took a deep interest. He had well learned to recognize Mr. Cook's value as a defender of the right, a leader of the church into "the regions beyond," in connection with the relations both held for so many years to the American Tract Society; and was prepared to accord him ready sympathy in the specific department of great Christian work to which his last years and energies were so successfully given.

To *Sabbath-school* efforts, Mr. Wilder was not indifferent, offering, many years ago, premiums to schools recently established; serving in Brooklyn with his friend Z. Lewis, Esq., as Visiting Committee to schools in Kings county, Long Island; and aiding in New York, in connection with Dr. John Proudfit and Mr. Grut, in the establishment of a school for French children, into which were drawn many from Roman-catholic families.

But it was not until old age that he himself personally became a Sabbath-school, or rather, a Bible-class teacher. Soon after removing to Elizabeth, New Jersey, he was earnestly requested to take charge of a class of young men, who might otherwise be tempted to leave the Sabbath-school. Of Mr. Wilder in this relation, a member of that class says,

"As I look back upon the days when I was a Sabbath-school scholar, I love to recall the pleasant hours spent with my revered teacher Mr. Wilder. Our class of five young men was about to be broken up, when the superintendent

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said to us he had secured the services of one whom he thought we should find both a profitable and pleasant teacher; an expectation which was fully realized.

"Mr. Wilder's first remark to us, upon assuming his position as our teacher, was, that he hoped to be the means under God of leading us to 'choose the good part which could never be taken from us;' and as he expected often in his closet to seek a blessing upon his work among us, he asked that we too would remember him in our supplications at the mercy-seat.

"The hour usually devoted to the lesson was spent in conversation upon the course of study to be pursued, and just before its close he said, 'Young gentlemen, I am now more than threescore years and ten, which to you, as you look forward, seems a long distance in the future, but when you reach it, if you ever do in God's providence, you will look back and wonder that the time has gone so rapidly; but this thing I have learned, that there is only one thing worth knowing, worth seeking, worth living or worth dying for—to know aright and to love the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"He was always at his place, no matter how unpleasant the weather, and so interesting did he make his lessons, that seldom was any member of his class absent. It was his custom to invite us to take tea with him one Sabbath of the month, and the evenings were spent by him in relating to us God's special providences to him; and in endeavoring to guard us from the peculiar temptations which beset the path of young men starting out in life. Before we separated, he always offered a fervent prayer, in which he committed us to the loving care of our heavenly Father.

"After Mr. Wilder had had charge of the class about six months, he told us he should be obliged to leave Elizabethtown for the summer; and we all remember the deep interest he took in endeavoring to find a teacher for us. At last he told us he thought he had succeeded in obtaining one we should all like, and asked us to come to his house that evening. On reaching there, we found the superintendent and our new teacher. The evening was spent in devotional exercises; and in bidding us 'Good-by,' he presented us each one

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with a Bible, on the fly-leaf of which he had written, with the name of the scholar, the following words: 'That the contents of this sacred volume may be your guide and comfort in life, your support and consolation at the great and eventful hour of death, and serve you as a theme of joy and rejoicing during the endless ages of eternity, is the prayer of your *old* Bible-class Teacher.'

"During the following week he called at our homes, and offered an earnest prayer for the spiritual and temporal welfare of each of his class. I know not what has become of all the other members of the class; but of this I feel sure, they often recall with special pleasure the hours passed with our '*old* Bible-class teacher,' Mr. Wilder."

It is certain that Mr. Wilder never forgot these young men. Even when memory, during his last hours, was thought to be perhaps clouded by the shades of death, as one of them, who had become related to him by marriage, came to his side, Mr. Wilder seemed for a moment to ignore the later tie, saying with much feeling, "The Lord bless him. I remember, he was most reliable."

In the founding of *Amherst college* as a fortress for the preservation and defence of orthodox truth, Mr. Wilder became early identified, and in supplying it with proper munitions of war, he was greatly instrumental. This was one of the enterprises for the benefit of his native state in which Mr. Wilder took peculiar interest, making it a point to attend the stated meetings of its Board, even at much personal inconvenience, and also to promote its interests in every way in his power.

Mr. Wilder was elected trustee in this institution

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in April, 1824. In his letter of acceptance, after a few words disclaiming his competency to fill the place, he went on to say, "Considering, however, this institution as among the most important in our country for the advancement of the great and glorious cause of our dear Redeemer, and not ashamed to own and acknowledge Jesus Christ as he is before men, I cannot but consider it a privilege to be associated with those who, I trust, are uninfluenced by motives of human consideration, and actuated only by a desire to promote the cause of truth, by endeavoring, with the aid of divine grace, to qualify some of the rising generation to go and proclaim salvation through the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer to a perishing world."

Rev. Dr. Heman Humphrey, the first President of Amherst college, was one of Mr. Wilder's most valued friends. In January, 1827, he wrote to Mr. Wilder, "If you can so arrange your business as to spend a few days in Boston while our petition is before the Legislature, it may be of essential service. To this end, however, it will be necessary to be there soon. I cannot say that I think our prospects of success very flattering from this Legislature; but I think we are preparing the way for a handsome grant shortly. May the Lord turn the hearts of our rulers towards this institution, and dispose them to foster all its important plans and interests."

Rev. Dr. Edward Hitchcock, in his "Reminis-

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cences of Amherst College," among others regarding Mr. Wilder, says,

"When a committee of the Legislature appeared in Amherst, to look into the affairs of the proposed Collegiate Institute, and its enemies attempted to show that the subscription was good for nothing, Mr. Wilder rendered great service by cashing note after note which were brought forward as worthless. He was also a liberal subscriber to the funds of the college."

Through the kindness of Professor E. S. Snell, a few additional facts have been collected.

"From the records of the meetings of the Trustees, I learn that S. V. S. Wilder was generally present, from the time of his appointment in 1824, to that of his resignation in 1841. I have also examined a manuscript historical sketch of the college by Dr. Humphrey. He gives in detail the incident before the committee of Representatives. The enemies were trying to show that the subscription list of $50,000 was in a large part worthless. A note of $100 was brought forward, and the inquiry made, 'Who is Mr. P—— of Danvers; and what is known of his responsibility?' Mr. Wilder said to the chairman, 'Please let me see the note.' Having looked at it, he said, 'I will cash it, sir,' and laid down the money. Soon another note was objected to, and treated in the same way. At length a third; and as Mr. Wilder was about to lay down the money, the chairman objected, saying, 'We have not come here to raise money for Amherst College.' This

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stopped that sort of operation among the foes of the college. This meeting for investigation was held in October, 1824.

"I have talked with Hon. Edward Dickinson, our college treasurer. He remembers well that his father, Samuel F. Dickinson, Esq., used often to ride to Ware to see Mr. Wilder, and to represent to him that the college must go down unless something was done immediately to relieve its necessities; and that Mr. Wilder in many instances became responsible for large sums for the relief of the institution. He knows too that he was liberal to the college in its straits."

It must have been at some meeting in behalf of Amherst College in some emergency that Mr. Wilder said, in closing a short address, "This Christian assembly will agree with me in asserting, that it is not a multiplicity of words or phrases that will answer the purpose on the present occasion; that the case is one of life or death; that *pecuniary* aid is the only means, under Providence, whereby we shall be enabled effectually to stop the breach at which the enemy are directing their shafts."

In 1841, when, on account of business reverses, Mr. Wilder felt it right to give up the offices then held by him in various societies, he sent in his resignation as Trustee of Amherst College. The following from Dr. Humphrey shows with what sentiments this request was granted.

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"AMHERST COLLEGE, August 5, 1841.

'S. V. S. WILDER, ESQ.:

"DEAR SIR—It was with extreme regret that the trustees of our college received the tender of your resignation as a member of the Board; and I need not assure you of the deep sympathy of every member with you in your present circumstances. You have been with us 'in six troubles, yea, in seven,' even from the beginning; and it was with the greatest reluctance that the trustees accepted your resignation. Whatever your pecuniary ability may be hereafter, your presence and your counsel would have been equally valuable to us as heretofore; but we would not insist upon what seemed to you inexpedient. I do but express the feelings of the whole Board, I am sure, in tendering you my warm acknowledgments for all you have done to help build up and sustain this struggling institution; and we all feel a strong assurance that you will never cease to pray for its prosperity.

"With great sincerity, your obedient servant,

"H. HUMPHREY."

An incident of some interest in connection with a proposed partial endowment of Amherst College, some years since, is related by Mr. Wilder.

"Being appointed one of the Trustees of Amherst College, President Humphrey and the Trustees knowing my intimacy with the rich merchant Mr. ——, and a new college being wanted with a chapel, the expense of erecting which would amount to some thirty thousand dollars, and after in vain endeavoring to obtain a grant from the state Legislature

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of Massachusetts, I was deputed by the faculty and trustees to wait on Mr. ——, and inform him that, on condition that he would make a grant to the college of $30,000, I was authorized to assure him that Amherst College should assume his name, and that in the contemplated new college two rooms should be appropriated in one of the best halls of said building, and being completely furnished, should be set apart for the exclusive accommodation of one of his descendants, who was to be furnished with board, fuel, lights, tuition, and clothing from year to year gratuitously to the end of time. Thus authorized, I went to Boston; and as it happened, in the providence of God, I met Mr. —— on the exchange, and was invited by him, with Peter C. Brooks, to dinner the same day. After dinner, when Mr. Brooks had left, finding myself alone with Mr. ——, I unfolded to him the object of my mission, and expatiated on the advantages which, in this changing world, his descendants might derive from this precautionary investment, whether they should ever become beneficiaries or not.

"'Your descendants, sir,' said I, 'hundreds of years after you shall be sleeping in the dust, will have the proud satisfaction of casting from time to time their eyes on an institution bearing the endeared name of their munificent ancestor; and it may perhaps exert a salutary influence on their character and conduct through each succeeding generation.'

"'Ah,' said Mr. ——, 'a little vanity in all this, Mr. Wilder; and I believe that my property must take its legitimate course, conscious that I shall leave property sufficient to prevent my descendants, for at least two or three succeeding generations, from being under the necessity of having recourse to beneficiary aid to obtain an education.'

"I replied, 'I hoped his calculations and predictions might prove correct; but that such had been, so far as my experience extended, the unforeseen mutations of this sublunary world, that without distrusting the goodness of a benign Providence, I considered a prudent foresight in providing against future contingencies as regards the welfare of those whom we have been instrumental in introducing into this wilderness world as not only commendable, but highly judi-

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cious; and I hoped that he might find grace to take this important matter under wise consideration. That in pleading the cause of Amherst College I felt that I was pleading in a more powerful degree the present, future, and eternal interests of his yet unborn posterity.' Said he, 'Mr. Wilder, my mind is fully made up. It needs no further consideration. My property must take its legitimate course.' 'This, sir,' I replied, 'being your final decision, I bid you a final farewell.'

"Thus ended my last interview with Mr. ——, to whose property I had been instrumental, during my commercial relationship with him, of adding upwards of $100,000.

"Years rolled on. Only seven of them had elapsed after the tomb had closed on the mortal remains of that man whose mountain, in his own estimation, seemed to stand so strong at my last interview, when two gentlemen entered my office in Wall-street, and addressing me, said, 'Sir, we believe you are a Trustee of Amherst College, and we have called to solicit your aid and to enlist your influence in admitting as a beneficiary to that institution a grandson of your late friend Mr. —— of Boston.' Judge of my amazement, and of the conflicting emotions which agitated me on hearing this announcement. I requested the gentlemen to repeat their declaration, in order that I might give credence to the hearing of my ears.

"They then stated that the young man in question was the son of ——, who had by his extravagance and irregularities spent all the ample patrimony left him by his wealthy father; that his mother had died of a broken heart, leaving eleven or twelve children, among whom was the young man for whose benefit they now sought my patronage, and whose miserable father was a mere wreck.

"I was reluctantly compelled to state to said gentlemen, that none were admitted to Amherst College as beneficiaries on the income of $50,000, except pious young men preparing for the gospel ministry; and as this young man had not this in view, my intervention and influence in his behalf could be of no avail.

"On these gentlemen retiring from my office, I was left with a sorrowful heart reflecting on the mutability of all earthly calculations, yet consoled with the cheering thought

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that the wise designs of God will, through all, be accomplished.

"Little did my venerable friend or myself, at the time of our last interview, foresee that, ere ten short years should have elapsed, my own personal influence would be solicited to obtain the admission of one of his grandsons into that very institution whose interests I was then advocating, by endeavoring, though in vain, to induce this man of wealth to aid in its endowment, and at the same time secure to one of his descendants a collegiate education down to the end of time."

In educational matters Mr. Wilder was ever ready to lend a helping hand, taking active interest in the establishment of a school of high grade in his native town, under the care of a pioneer in that line, Mr. J. G. Carter. To him also would Mr. Josiah Holbrook often come for sympathy and aid when discouraged by constant rebuff from those who did not appreciate his ideas as to methods of instruction, which were indeed far ahead of his day, although now extensively in vogue.

To Williams College, as acknowledged in a letter from its president, Rev. Dr. Edward D. Griffin, Mr. Wilder made at least one liberal donation, and his advice was solicited by Dr. Griffin regarding the best modes of promoting the interests of that institution. He also aided colleges in other parts of the country.

He served as trustee of Groton Academy, in which capacity he became acquainted with Rev. Dr. John Todd, a champion for the truth, who, among other labors, does not forget, by means of "truth made simple," to obey our Saviour's command, "Feed my lambs."

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The advantages offered to some Greek refugee boys, and other religious aspects of the "*Mount Pleasant School*" at Amherst, under the care of Messrs. Colton and Fellows, and in which his friend Mr. Thayer was also interested, greatly enlisted Mr. Wilder in its favor. There for a time he sent his own bright, black-haired protegé, a young refugee from the island of Scio. Mr. Wilder had called at the missionary rooms in Boston as some Greek boys unexpectedly arrived there. When he first saw them, the little strangers were sitting forlorn about the missionary office-room, unable to speak English, or to converse except with each other. The secretaries asked, "Mr. Wilder, what shall we do with them?" He answered, "I will take charge of one. The Lord will provide friends for the others also;" and so indeed it proved. Suitable homes were soon procured for all. Dr. Alexander George Paspati of Constantinople, where he is a well-known and distinguished physician, must well remember his American home of so many years ago.

With the Mount Pleasant school are also associated the names of the Italian Cardella and of the Rev. John Cassimir Rostan, who had both taken refuge in this country from persecution abroad on account of evangelical sentiments, looking here to Mr. Wilder as their chief earthly dependence. Mr. Rostan, Mr. Wilder had known in Paris, when befriended there by Dr. Adolphe Monod and Rev. Lewis Way. He was "a man of extensive science,

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a rare Christian, as well as an uncommon scholar," but lacked some necessary qualifications as a teacher and for every-day life.

Mr. Wilder was ever ready to lend a helping hand to those requiring it, especially to those who he believed were "of the household of faith." In visits of friendly sympathy to such he often felt himself richly repaid, as also in using his country home almost as a convalescent hospital for disabled ministers. And how much did he feel his spirit refreshed when able to give an hour in the sick-room of such men as Harlan Page and the Rev. Samuel Green.

In visits of consolation and charity Mr. Wilder indeed abounded, mingling prayer and supplication with the gifts ever left behind when needed. In a letter acknowledging some remembrance of the kind, the writer says, "Please accept of my most heartfelt gratitude for your kind present; and what makes it more valuable is your accustomed unostentatious manner of bestowing your favors."

It were vain to attempt a full account of Mr. Wilder as a philanthropist. It was his life, his profession, to do good. By private charity he endeavored to supplement what could not come before the public eye. It is impossible to enumerate his benefactions in detail.

Mr. Wilder's interest in the sailor, and *Seamen's Friend Society*, was shown, among other ways, by a plan proposed by him, by which a quarter of the proceeds of a certain enterprise was to be devoted

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towards the support of a mariner's church. He also contributed towards the funds of the *Prison Discipline Society*. In 1824 he was elected "member of the Bunker Hill Monument Association," Edward Everett being its secretary. In 1826 he was duly appointed "justice of the peace" for Worcester county, under Governor Levi Lincoln, and in the same year was elected vice-president of the "New England Society for the Promotion of Manufactures and the Mechanic Arts."

About the years 1825 to 1830, while living in Massachusetts, he often visited his friends Daniel Waldo, Esq. and his three aged maiden sisters, in their elegant mansion in Worcester. Their very appearance, manners, and style of living, were specimens of the magnificent antique. These ladies, wishing to apportion their wealth in a way to do good after they were gone, consulted Mr. Wilder as to the best way of doing this. No commission could have been more to his taste. He proposed to them the founding of a "Waldo Retreat" for ladies in reduced circumstances, to be built and endowed by his friends on a large scale, and to be maintained in part by payments to be made on the principle adopted by life insurance companies, securing a home at the age of sixty.

The idea of thus providing for those less favorably situated than themselves pleased these worthy ladies. They asked Mr. Wilder to have the necessary plans and drawings made out, intending to

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adopt them, when the sudden death of their brother, and soon that of the sisters successively, put a stop to the whole matter.

Mr. Wilder, however, never quite gave up the plan, thinking such an establishment most desirable in this growing country, where change of fortune is of such frequent occurrence. Even during the last months of his life he sent the drawings of the proposed building, and papers connected with it, to New York, to gentlemen who he thought might be glad to carry them into execution. He spoke of this "retreat" within a fortnight of his death, hoping still that something of the kind would be founded before long, "by which some now well-known name might ever be held in grateful remembrance."

That a man like Mr. Wilder, with hand and heart so ready to every good work, should, in his latter years, have his means most seriously curtailed, was indeed a mystery. But "the Lord taketh knowledge of his servants." That he might attain more completeness of Christian character, perhaps his religion needed to be tested when deprived of the power of outward manifestation in its long accustomed charitable channels. Thanks be to God, through grace, "though for a season in heaviness, the trial of his faith was found unto praise and honor and glory."

It had often been Mr. Wilder's duty, as may have been inferred, and as many will remember, to preside on various occasions at public meetings of

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societies with which he was connected. Here his dignity of person and courtly manners, together with his knowledge of proper forms to be maintained, gave him peculiar advantage.

It is interesting however to note the last time Mr. Wilder took charge of any large meeting. An orphan asylum had recently been established in the place of his residence. At its first anniversary in 1859, he was asked to preside, and many present can recall his appearance on that occasion, his venerable form surmounting the small group of orphans, whom, with their many friends, he greeted with a few words of congratulation and hope. A fitting termination this to a long apprenticeship in similar duty. Here seemed to meet of human life the outer verges as to age, character, and position. As in a dissolving view we seem to see S. V. S. Wilder, from such a scene as this readily transferred to a higher platform, leaving behind an example more valuable to the young, as a practical exhibition of Christian beneficence, than are even the "Seventy-seven Maxims," drawn up by him at the age of seventy-seven, directly for their benefit. May his mantle rest upon many successors, and soon, by the blessing of God, shall be ushered in the full tide of millennial glory.

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XVII.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Cor. 10:31.

THE Rev. Dr. Chickering has had the kindness to prepare the following sketch of Mr. Wilder in relation to *temperance.*

Mr. Wilder's health and personal appearance at the age of fourscore, was both an illustration and an argument for temperance. His freshness of complexion, the erectness of his frame, the vigor of his utterance, and the firmness of his step, all told of good habits engrafted on a good constitution, bringing forth such fruit in old age—a sound mind in a sound body.

A gentleman of extensive observation, soon after his return from a tour in the Pacific ocean, remarked, "I have been in Europe, Asia, and Africa, besides my native country, but never anywhere have I seen so fine looking a man, on the whole, as Mr. Wilder."

In early years he had been preserved from the temptations and snares into which many fall; and as he entered on mercantile life, he managed to keep free from that excess, both of appetite and indulgence, which too often followed the social customs to which he was introduced. Not only was he temperate in drink, but in food; usually rising from the

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table, as he said, "with a disposition to go another slice."

And when, in the early stages of the temperance reform, he found it necessary, on the ground of that high Christian expediency which often involves the most inevitable duty, to abandon the then common habits of using and offering wine at the table, it was no hardship to consign the mild and pure contents of his wine cellar to the use of the sick and infirm.

But "this bold, brave man" was not long satisfied with a silent example. He very early entered into the aggressive war against the giant sin intemperance, under the wise and zealous leadership of such men as Dr. Lyman Beecher and Dr. Justin Edwards. The latter was his amanuensis and helper in the publication of the well-known tract, "THE WELL-CONDUCTED FARM."

This was a veritable history of the temperance principles introduced on his own farm of six hundred acres in Bolton, and was one of the earliest experiments to test the practicability of farming on strict temperance principles. The experiment was eminently successful. The men who, when first requested to dispense with the usual daily portion of ardent spirits, were offended, and threatened to leave the farm, were among the first in testifying to the improvement resulting from the new plan.

Mr. Wilder's offers were so liberal, that no workman could suspect a sordid motive; the laborers being promised nourishing food and drink in any

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abundance which they wished, and twelve dollars additional wages at the close of the year. He said he would have his farm grow up to weeds, rather than be cultivated by means of a practice so pernicious to body and soul as that of taking ardent spirits.

The experiment of *temperance farming* succeeded admirably; and was followed, the next year, by the additional stipulation, that no workman should in any way procure or use those poisons. All the laborers on his farm agreed to the proposed terms; and "were afterwards remarkably uniform in their temper and deportment; still, and peaceable. Their employer found them every day alike, and could always trust them. What he expected to have done, he found *was* done, and in the best manner. His men had never made so few mistakes, nor had so few disputes among themselves; they never injured so few tools, found so little fault with their manner of living, or were, on the whole, so pleasant to one another, and to their employer."

Many thanks he received, from one and another among them, for putting them in the way of such improved health, and increased savings, and multiplied comforts in their families.

"At the close of the year, one of them came to Mr. Wilder, and with tears in his eyes, said, 'Sir, I thought you were very hard, in keeping us from drinking rum. I had always been accustomed to it, and I thought that I could not do without it. And for the first three months,' said he, 'it was hard, very hard. I had such a *caving in* here,' putting his hands up to his side, 'I had such a *desperate caving in*

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here, that I thought I should die. But, as you gave us good wages, and good pay, and the rest resolved to stand it without rum, I thought I would. And now,' said he, 'I am well and happy. I work with ease, sleep sweetly, and when I get up in the morning, instead of having, as I used to, my mouth and throat *so full of cobwebs* as to be *spitting cotton wool* all the time, my mouth and throat are clear as a whistle, I feel active, have a good appetite, and can eat any thing.

"'Formerly, when I worked hard, I was at night tired, and could not sleep. When I got up in the morning, I was so sore and stiff, so filled up in my throat, and my appetite was so gone, that I could do nothing till I had taken a glass of rum and molasses. I then stood it till breakfast. But my breakfast did not relish, and what I took did not seem to nourish me. Soon after I got to work I was *so hollow and so tired*, that I felt *desperate ugly* till 11 o'clock. Then I took a *new vamper*. And by the strength of that I got on till dinner. Then I must have a little more to give me an appetite. At three o'clock in the afternoon I must have recourse *to the hair of the same dog*, to keep up my sinking spirits. And thus I got along till night. Then I must have a little to sharpen appetite for supper. And after supper I could not sleep till I had taken *another nightcap*.

"'Thus I continued year after year, undermining a constitution which was naturally robust, and growing worse and worse until I came under your wise and excellent regulations; and now *I am cured*. I can do more labor than when I took spirits, without half the fatigue. If a man would give me the same wages that you do, and a dollar a day in addition, to return to the practice of drinking rum, I would laugh at him.'

"Nor," continues this graphic delineator of the well-conducted farm and its laborers, "were the benefits confined to them and their employer. Some of his *neighbors*, witnessing the complete success of his system, have themselves adopted it. When Mr. Wilder went into that part of the country, many of the farmers in his neighborhood were in debt. Their farms were mortgaged, some for $300, some for $500,

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and some for $1,000, or more. They complained much of *hard times*, especially for farmers.

"Mr. Wilder told them that so long as they continued to drink rum, they must expect hard times; for it was no profit, but a great expense, and in more ways than they imagined. They came to him to borrow money to save their farms from attachment. But he told them, No. It will do men who continue to drink rum no good to have money. Nay, it will be to them an evil. The sooner their property is gone, and they have nothing with which to buy rum, the better. For then they will do less mischief than if they have money, and continue to drink rum.

"'If you will leave off the use of spirits,' said he, 'and not take a drop for three months, I will lend you money, and you may keep it by paying the interest, as long as you continue to take no ardent spirits. But when I learn that you begin to take it, I shall call for the money.' Some went away in disgust. Others said, 'As Mr. Wilder can do without rum, why cannot we? and if we can, it will be a great saving of expense.' They made the experiment, and found that they could, without the least inconvenience, do without it.

"After a few months, they made known to Mr. Wilder the result, and he helped them to as much money as they needed. They continued to do without spirits, and they had none used by men in their employ. Their business began to prosper, and their prospects to brighten. Their debts are now paid, and their farms free from all incumbrance. The times with them have altered, and they are now thriving, respectable, and useful members of the community.

"Others who a few years ago were in no worse a condition than they, but who continued the practice of drinking spirits, have lost their farms, lost their reputation, lost their health, and eventually their lives, and there is reason to fear, their souls. By the temperate but habitual use of spirits, they formed an *intemperate appetite*. This at first was occasionally, and then habitually indulged; and they were ruined for both worlds. The evil may extend to their children, and children's children.

"But those who have entirely relinquished the use of

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spirits until the desire for it is removed, have experienced a wonderful transformation in their feelings, their conduct, and their prospects. And the change is visible not only in them, but their families, and all their concerns. Their windows are not broken out as before, nor their gates and garden fences falling down. The wife does not scold as she once did, because she is well provided for, is treated kindly, and has encouragement to labor. The children are not now in rags, but are comfortably and decently clad; they are obedient, respectful, and mannerly, and appear to be growing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In short, they appear almost like a new race of beings. And if they should never again adopt the practice of taking ardent spirits, there is vastly more reason than before, to hope that they will be led by the word and Spirit of God to such a course of conduct as will greatly increase their happiness and usefulness on earth, and be the means of preparing them, through grace, for the everlasting joys of heaven.

"The men are more serious in their deportment, spend more of their leisure time in useful reading, much oftener peruse the Scriptures and attend public worship, and are more attentive to all the means of grace. In a word, they are more likely to become useful and happy in this life, and to be prepared for lasting blessedness in the life to come."

This probability became, in the case of many there employed, from year to year, a happy certainty. The connection between temperance and religion was beautifully exemplified in the new measure of power possessed by the truth over persons not disturbed, even slightly, in their mental operations, by the artificial stimulus of intoxicating drinks, however sparingly used. Rough men, coming within the quiet, temperate, Sabbath keeping atmosphere of that farm, became thoughtful, restrained, and in many cases, humble and devout.

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Do we not need at the present day, not only a new religious impulse, but a more close alliance between the temperance cause and those religious motives and influences to which it has owed, and from which it must ever expect, its brightest triumphs?

The proprietor of that farm once expressed his grateful satisfaction that for more than thirty years no workman or neighbor, or fellow-man of his, had acquired or strengthened, through his agency, an appetite which has cast down so many strong men, and wounded and laid low the honor of many an ancient family.

This last result of strong drink was sadly illustrated in the case of the son of an old European friend of Mr. Wilder, as described in the following graphic letter, the Rev. father's reply to which, alluding to Mr. Wilder's then recent bereavement of his only son, began thus: "So you see, my dear old friend, that it may be better to weep over a son in infancy, than to groan over him in manhood."

"BOLTON, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS, August 15, 1833.

"MY OLD AND DEAR FRIEND—God forbid that I should plant one additional thorn in, I fear, your already too often wounded and agonized breast; but I am under the necessity of relating to you an event which has caused my heart to bleed, as it will yours on receipt of this.

"Since my departure from Paris, I have never been informed of any particulars relating to the progress in life of your dear children, but from the circumstance of their having been blessed with the best of fathers as well as mothers, I had fondly hoped they were all pursuing a virtuous and successful course.

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"While surrounding our tea-table last evening with a number of friends, among whom was a highly respectable lady and her son and two daughters from London, my servant informed me that a ragged sailor-boy wished to speak with me at the gate. I immediately left the table, it being between sundown and dark, and on approaching the piazza I beheld an object in the shape of a human being in a state of almost complete destitution, having on an old cap, the remains of a dirty checked shirt and duck pantaloons, barelegged, and nearly barefoot. Said he trembling, with a faltering voice, 'Mr. Wilder, I wish to speak with you aside.'

"'Well, sir,' I replied, 'say on.'

"'I am the son, sir, of —— ——, of Paris; my name, sir, is ——.'

"'What,' said I, 'you pretend to be the son of my old friend whose name you assume? impossible,' I exclaimed.

"'It is,' said he, 'but too true,' bursting into a flood of tears.

"'What proof can you give me,' said I, 'that you are the son of that excellent and distinguished man; and what misfortune has brought you to the position in which I now behold you?'

"'My history,' said he, 'is a long, sad, and painful one; but I once travelled with my father, Mrs. Wilder, and yourself from Dover to Paris, on your return from England in 1819; and do you remember, sir, that on your leaving Paris for America, you presented a piano to my sister, which she stills retains as a choice relic.'

"By this time a number of the inmates of our house had collected on the piazza, and on my asking the young sailor to walk in to an adjoining room and take some refreshment, he declined, saying that he was not worthy to come under my roof, but as he had walked from Boston, 30 miles, that day, and was somewhat fatigued, he should feel much obliged by being permitted to lodge in my stable.

"I replied to him, that if he was really the son of my old and much valued friend ——, I should insist on his coming in, and taking some refreshment.

"At length he reluctantly assented; and on entering the

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saloon he soon recognized Mrs. Wilder among a dozen ladies, observing, at the same time, that she was not so slender as when in Paris; and then turning to me and observing my gray hairs, he said, 'I have been the occasion of bringing my good father's gray hairs almost to the grave;' and again burst into a flood of tears.

"I could no longer remain in unbelief as to his being your son; and whatever might be his history, for your and his good mother's sake, Mrs. Wilder and myself could no longer resist extending to him the hand of affection.

"Having become somewhat composed, he gave us in brief an account of his shipwreck, and an outline of his subsequent wretched life and sufferings, and imputed all his misery to having disregarded the advice, and abused *for years* the confidence of the best of fathers; stating that his only wish now was to pass the remainder of his days in some copper-mine, or on some desolate island, or in the western wilds of America, where his father and family should never again hear from him.

"I recommended him to dismiss such ideas, take some nourishment, and retire to rest, with which he readily complied; and on conducting him to his chamber, I was delighted to hear him ask for a Bible.

"On the following morning, Mrs. Wilder ordered the servants to have him scrubbed in soapsuds from head to foot; and at the bottom of one of my French trunks she found a new Parisian suit of clothes which were much too small for me, and which just suited him; and thus equipped, he appeared in the saloon, to the great delight of the ladies, and attended prayers, on which occasion I read the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, during which a solemnity prevailed such as I have seldom been permitted to witness.

"When the family exercises were concluded, he retired with me into my library, and there evinced great remorse of conscience, expressed much sorrow for his past folly and misconduct, and really appeared very penitent; but said he, 'I cannot, like the prodigal, go to my father, and say, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son;' for,' said he, 'I have too

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often abused my good father by false promises, and he now requires of me actions, and not words; and I am determined never to appear before him until I have evinced the sincerity of my professions by a corresponding conduct.

"'The fact is,' said he, 'that thus far I have not been able to resist temptation; and this has been my ruin. Smoking, intoxicating liquors, and gambling have been my besetting sins. But,' said he, 'if you can procure me a berth on board an American man-of-war, I think I can make my way in the world.'

"'If you cannot resist temptation,' said I, 'that is the last situation you should seek, as it is of all others the most dangerous to a young man even of correct habits.'

"I have invited him to make himself at home under our roof for the present. I wish to ascertain what vocation he is best qualified to pursue, and to watch his inclinations. It so happens that I am the President of three Temperance Societies, and as we drink generally nothing but pure cold water, your son is not in much danger of indulging in strong drink while with us.

"It is proper that you should know the worst of the case, though it pains me to add, that he was somewhat under the influence of liquor when he reached my dwelling; but he assures me he had drunk more that day than for three months before.

"18th. I had written thus far, when I was interrupted by the arrival of company.

"I am happy to say your son appears already quite an altered man, and he continues to charm the ladies by his gentlemanly deportment, his elegant language, his eloquent conversation, and universal information, demonstrating a finished education, combined with first-rate talents.

"I cannot yet determine what steps are best to be taken with regard to this wayward youth. If he were pious, I could, I think, secure him a place as associate professor in a college of which I am one of the trustees, and where he might have an opportunity of establishing a character, and thereby pave the way to his entering on the duties of his profession as surgeon; but he has, he says, no pretensions

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to piety. He seems inclined to go on board a whale-ship to the South seas—this would complete his ruin at once. He says, however, he is willing to do any thing but return to Europe.

"Please to assure his excellent mother, and be yourself assured, of every effort on the part of Mrs. Wilder and myself to reclaim this interesting young man, and to afford him one opportunity more, by the grace of God assisting, of commencing a virtuous and respectable course, and thereby enable him to contribute to render your declining years as happy as he has, according to his own account, rendered them miserable in years that are past.

"Referring you to the inclosed document, which he has just handed me, I remain,

"Truly your sympathizing friend,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

Considering Mr. Wilder's social position, it is not strange, even aside from his energy and ability in urging whatever he thought right and true, that he should have had a wide influence in the temperance cause, and have been regarded as one of its champions.

As early as 1827, he was invited by Rev. Dr. Woods to address an assembly at the Hanover church, Boston. In Charleston, S. C., at a later date, he was called to preside and speak at a temperance meeting. In all the early as well as later periods of the struggle against this vice, his example and influence, his voice and purse were often looked to, and not in vain.

In a private way, even as early as 1817, and as long as he lived, we find him befriending the fallen, and by pecuniary aid, offered on condition of abstinence, encouraging the tempted.

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His Seventy-seven Counsels to his Grandsons, written at the age of 77, include cautions respecting this prolific source of ruin to young men and sorrow to their friends.

During one of his summers at White Lake, he took pains to learn and record the history, for half a century, of two families in that vicinity: the one temperate and prosperous; the other, through indulgence in "the pipe and jug," now extinct.

This introduces another phase of his temperance history and efforts. Mr. Wilder was the sworn enemy of *narcotic* as well as alcoholic indulgence. He lost no opportunity, especially in the last years of his life, of cautioning his young friends against the various tobacco abominations which pollute so many public and private places, and even the pure air; and help, in so many instances, to form other pernicious appetites.

"NEW YORK, September 16, 1834.

"JOHN TAPPAN, ESQ., Boston:

"MY DEAR SIR—Finding myself, a little over a month since, in the stage from Providence to Worcester, with a person who had still in appearance the remains of a gentleman, and remarking that at every public-house he drank brandy, or some other liquid fire, as often as our stage horses drank pure water, I at length asked him if he found the liquor on that route so remarkable for its superior quality as to induce him to have such frequent recourse to it, and if he really thought it did him any good.

"'As to its quality, sir,' said he, 'I am not aware that it is better than what I find in other sections of our country, but I am sure what little I drink does me good, and my health is excellent—that is to say, with some few exceptions. On rising in the morning, for example, it is true I feel some-

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what ugly and depressed, but a good glass of sling sets me to rights, and by occasionally taking a glass through the day, I feel in good spirits until bed-time; and if, as it sometimes happens, I have little or no appetite for my meals, a moderate glass of brandy and water will generally create an appetite, and enable me to relish my food, though I am sometimes troubled with indigestion, but I never make a practice of drinking to my injury.'

"'Well, sir,' said I, 'I have the satisfaction to assure you that my health is excellent also, without experiencing any of the ills of which you complain, having confined myself principally to pure water for several years past, and for the last thirty years I am not aware of having drank half a pint of ardent spirits.'

"On saying this, I had the misfortune, or as it has eventuated, I may say the good fortune, of taking a pinch of snuff.

"'Pray, sir,' said the gentleman, 'do you think that snuff, of which, to say the least, you seem to take a pinch as often as I take grog, does you any good?'

"'Sir,' I replied, 'I exceedingly regret the necessity which obliges me to have recourse to this vile practice, but in consequence of feeble eyes, my physician recommended snuff as the best remedy, and in accordance with his prescription, I have been compelled to take it for several years.'

"'Well, sir,' said the gentleman, 'your case is precisely mine. I have a feeble stomach, and I have long been compelled to take an occasional drop of spirits for its relief and restoration.'

"'Is it possible,' said I to myself, 'that my taking snuff should serve as a pretext for drunkards to ruin perhaps both soul and body?' and I silently resolved that, eyes or no eyes, by the grace of God assisting, I would desist from taking a pinch of snuff for one month; and if, at the expiration of that period, my eyes suffered no inconvenience, I would for ever renounce the pernicious practice.

"In order to enable me the better to test the strength of my resolution to resist temptation, I merely transferred my box from my waistcoat to my pantaloons pocket, where it

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has remained for one month, without my having taken a single pinch of the poisonous drug; and my eyes, praised be God, having suffered thus far no inconvenience, I herewith have the pleasure and satisfaction of sending you my snuff-box, which please to receive as a trophy of a victory gained, the grace of God assisting, by one who was once an *inveterate snuff-taker*, but who now considers himself emancipated from this sinful and disgusting habit,* and who recommends to all other snuff-takers, or chewers, or smokers of tobacco, to go and do likewise.

"S. V. S. W."

Thus did our departed friend, in this and other things, show his faith by his works; adding virtue, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity to that firm attachment to doctrinal truth which, when supposed to be dissociated from these graces, leads to the suspicion and reproach of hypocrisy.

He thus also proved that godliness is profitable unto all things. Few men could say as he, at the age of eighty, that he had "no aches or pains," not knowing even headache or toothache in his own experience.

* This victory was gained for life, and this snuff-box in the hands of temperance speakers has done good service.

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XVIII.

I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Phil. 4: 12.

In the spring of 1830, Mr. Wilder removed with his family from Bolton to Brooklyn. Inducements had been offered him to engage in business in New York. The education of his children rendered the change of residence desirable; and Brooklyn, Mr. Wilder thought, offered peculiar advantages in that respect. Here, in the immediate neighborhood of his esteemed friend Zechariah Lewis, Esq., he spent more than two years. This city, not then one "of churches," was at that time so limited in accommodations of the kind, that it was with difficulty Mr. Wilder could find room for his family in its then only Presbyterian church, Dr. Carroll being the pastor.

The time of Mr. Wilder's residence in Brooklyn was varied by a few months' stay in Charleston, S. C., for the benefit of Mrs. Wilder's health, soon happily restored. That place was then seen in its happiest aspects, there being there, as in many places elsewhere in 1831 and 1832, a revival of religion in its churches. In the society of Gen. Van Rensselaer

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and of members of his family, also there in pursuit of health, and in the prevalent hospitality, Mr. and Mrs. Wilder found much to render their visit to the South agreeable.

Into Mr. Wilder's temporary home in Brooklyn came perhaps the deepest sorrow of his life. His son, his only son, was there taken from him, he who, he fondly hoped, would transmit his name and usefulness to future generations. S. V. S. Wilder, Jr., died in Brooklyn, Feb. 20th, 1832, at the age of three years and eight months.

From Brooklyn, Mr. Wilder moved to New York, living first in Chambers-street, afterwards in Washington-place, and in Broadway, passing the summer months however at Bolton, and remaining there altogether for the three or four years succeeding 1841.

In Chambers-street, where now few landmarks of the past have been preserved, his house adjoined that of his friend and partner Mr. Nathaniel Richards, with whom he soon became more closely connected through the marriage of their children.

Gustavus Upson Richards, who now became so nearly related to Mr. Wilder, was indeed a lovely specimen of a young Christian merchant, not losing refinement of feeling and manners in the earnest, constant devotion to his Master's service, for which he was remarkable. Religion, permeating his whole character, seemed rather to raise him to a higher sphere than that ordinarily occupied. At a very early age he was elected elder in the Mercer-street

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church, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Skinner, who fully appreciated the qualities, so unusual for his years, of his young associate in the church session. Such a spirit, when called from earth, it seemed easy to follow, as but transferred to a place still nearer to the eternal throne.

But Mr. Wilder's home in Chambers-street, like that in Brooklyn, was at one time darkened by the shadow of death. A gentle little daughter of eighteen months died there from the effects of whooping-cough. This, as well as other previous bereavements, Mr. Wilder received as from the hand of his heavenly Father; and dear also to his heart was the Christian sympathy of those he loved, that especially of his friend and associate in the American Tract Society, Rev. Dr. Hallock, whose only son, and again, whose beloved infant daughter, were, by strange coincidence, also taken away about the same time that Mr. Wilder was called to part successively with his two children.

Before Mr. Wilder's removal to Washington-place, then almost at the outer limits of New-York, he attended the Murray-street church; but he then joined the congregation soon located in Mercer-street. In the spiritual and excellent sermons of his pastor, Dr. Skinner, in the evening and also frequent morning meetings for prayer which were soon instituted, Mr. Wilder took never-failing delight. Vigorous in health, scarcely passed the prime of his manhood, his days given to business and benevolence, his evenings to religious services, to an occa-

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sional lecture or to informal social visiting among his friends, with every leisure moment devoted to a course of useful reading, the lines still fell to Mr. Wilder in pleasant places. Among the friends now in his immediate vicinity, Hon. Benjamin F. Butler and Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen—both showing what a Christian may be even in political life—Mr. Samuel Ward, Dr. J. G. Coggswell, and others, well deserve more than a casual mention.

Nor did business nor benevolence, nor church services and friendly intercourse, nor reading, so fully occupy Mr. Wilder, that he could not give patient attention to other matters. The son of his old friend Dr. Morse, Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, in 1835, asked him to examine his then lately invented electric telegraph, and now has the kindness to give the following account of Mr. Wilder's interest in it while yet almost an untried experiment.

"NEW YORK, April 24, 1865.

"There were two periods of experiments, or rather exhibitions, of particular note, one commencing in the year 1835, during which period many distinguished persons were present: James Fennimore Cooper, Rear-admiral Shubrick, and others. The telegraph, in this early stage of its existence, was shown in operation to various persons: to Daniel Huntington, Esq., now President of the National Academy of Design; to Osbert Loomis, Esq., and others my pupils in painting, in the years 1835, 1836; but in 1837 there was a more public exhibition of it in the University, at which were present several hundred persons. Mr. Wilder was among the earliest visitors, took a deep interest in the invention, and always expressed himself sanguinely, believing in its ultimate success.

"I well remember his relating to me an incident in his

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life which occurred in Paris, and which had ever since affected his feelings and conduct towards the proposers of new inventions. He was at a dinner-party at the American minister's—Mr. Livingston, I think, was then minister—at which were present many distinguished men of various countries, and *Robert Fulton* was among the guests. During the dinner and in the evening the proposals of Mr. Fulton to introduce the steam-boat were discussed in the various groups. A few, the American minister among the rest, were sanguine of the eventual success of the novel enterprise; but the great majority of the company scouted the idea of its practicability. Mr. Fulton, however, was in no wise disconcerted at this opposition, but bore it patiently, and the indifference of others with equal reserve.

"Mr. Wilder said that he then sympathized with Fulton, and had often cited the incident against the sceptical in new discoveries to reprove their opposition; and when Fulton's success was acknowledged in after times, it became a rule with Mr. Wilder never to consider the proposal of a new invention as absurd, however at first blush it may wear that appearance. He related this incident to me as an encouragement to perseverance, at a time when the telegraphic invention was encountering very much the same sort of obstacles from the opposition of incredulity and self-complacent ignorance.

"Mr. Wilder was a warm and valued friend, and I have from my childhood always entertained the highest respect and affection for him, for his friendly disposition, and especially for his consistent Christian character.

"SAMUEL F. B. MORSE."

At the time of the exhibition of the magnetic telegraph, in 1837, there was at first some difficulty in the arrangement of the wire or in the working of the battery. Many of those present became impatient. One after another a number went away, till perhaps a dozen or twenty alone remained to

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be the honored witnesses of the great invention. Among these few was S. V. S. Wilder. Although not himself a scientific man, yet he had great confidence in the general principles involved, in the honesty and skill of his friend Mr. Morse, and in his knowledge of the mysterious agent whom he sought to tame as a swift messenger, and in doing which he so thoroughly succeeded.

Mr. Wilder often spoke of all the improvements so rapidly made during the last thirty or more years, in modes of travel both by land and sea, as being but fulfilments of prophecy, when "valleys should be exalted and hills made low" to "prepare the way of the Lord," that "knowledge of him might be increased."

To Mr. Wilder's ardent temperament was conjoined a strong pertinacity of purpose; perhaps an unusual type of character. In matters of little moment, it must be confessed this sometimes degenerated into a somewhat inconvenient mood. In building, gardening, in various arrangements for business or pleasure, the best way was to him the only way. He wished to have things done "just right, not about right." This sometimes led him into unnecessary expenditures of time and money.

In pecuniary speculations Mr. Wilder did not often enter. At one time however, with a few other friends of usually careful judgment, he was brought into some gold-mining enterprise in Virginia. Lands there had been taken by these gentlemen for debt. An agent reported them as of almost untold value,

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verifying the statement by specimens of very rich gold ore, brought, however, from some other mines. The company formed, far from wishing to deceive others, were themselves deceived. From the furnace of temptation to save themselves at the expense of others, Mr. Wilder and his old partners also, Messrs. Richards and Taylor, proved themselves to be the true gold alone evolved. They refused to sell stock while it yet stood at a high figure, lest others should through them be losers. In at least two cases Mr. Wilder, after the assessments began to be heavy, took up shares of this gold-stock, giving his own check on the spot to persons having no real claim upon him. "This," said one, "Mr. Wilder, is doing as you would be done by." The other exclaimed, "Wilder, you are a gentleman."

Until 1841, Mr. Wilder, on the whole, was much prospered in his business affairs. In New York he was engaged as a banker, and in the shipment of cotton, rice, and other produce, in connection with his old friends the Messrs. Hottinguer. His office was of course in or about Wall-street. Before the time of the great fire in 1833, it was in Exchange-place. How distinctly is that locality remembered now "by fair Zurich's waters," by one of its most distinguished citizens. Between Mr. Wilder and Mr. John Stocker, a nephew of Baron Hottinguer, and long Mr. Wilder's confidential clerk, a strong reciprocal attachment was here formed, which well stood the test of time and distance. Upon the re-

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ceipt of a photograph, large size, of Mr. Wilder in 1860, Mr. Stocker expressed himself as follows: "Let me tell you, dear old friend, that all my family and relations expressed great delight to have had at last the opportunity to see the features of that respected man of whom they have so much heard. This beautifully executed portrait shows me still the same beloved features as I have held them in my mind's eye these twenty years past. The only alteration I have found out is the beard, which quite surprised me."

But the "years of plenty" during which Mr. Stocker had thus learned to know and revere Mr. Wilder passed away. In 1841 the tide of success, so long in the ascendant as regards Mr. Wilder's mercantile life, in the good providence of God began to ebb. Into details it is not necessary here to enter. Frauds at the South in the sorting and packing of cotton not according to the samples given, its fall in the foreign market, the temporary depreciation in real estate, upon which it was for a time almost impossible to realize, the failure of the United States Bank in whose concerns Mr. Wilder had become involved, with other causes, combined to bring about this unforeseen revulsion. It concerns us more to observe the cheerful submission with which, after the first stunning blow, he accepted his trying reverse of fortune. Let us first, however, note the following testimony from John Tappan, Esq., to Mr. Wilder's character as a merchant:

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"In all my large mercantile operations with him, we never differed, having perfect confidence in each other; and I am sure mine was well reposed, for a more conscientious person I have never found.

"He was a true friend to those who had aided him, as I was often aware by his loaning or giving to persons sums to which I thought they had no claim. He was from our first acquaintance a fast friend, of which he gave evidence in his arrangements with his immediate partners, Richards, Taylor, and Upson.

"In looking back upon the whole of my acquaintance with him, I see nothing on his part but a high sense of honor in his every act. In the seductions of Nicholas Biddle, at the time the latter controlled unbounded wealth, I date his ruin; but almost any man might have been involved in the same way, as there appeared no hazard in being linked commercially with one who controlled the Bank of the United States, and who probably, but for the hostility of President Jackson to the bank, would have been, as he was universally believed to be, a man of wealth. In the misfortune of Mr. Wilder, the utmost that enmity or envy could charge him with was, and has ever been, in my opinion, a want of judgment in putting trust in so large a schemer as Mr. Biddle was proved after his failure to have been. Had Mr. Wilder held fast to his unalterable friend Mr. Hottinguer, his sad failure could not have taken place. None lamented it more than myself.

"JOHN TAPPAN."

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We can almost see why it pleased his heavenly Father thus to afflict Mr. Wilder. Had his course in life as a business man been one of uninterrupted prosperity, a striking example of cheerful Christian resignation would have been lost; yes, *Christian* resignation as opposed to the stoical, almost stolid indifference with which some men affect to meet what they call the decrees of fate; or again, to the despair by which others allow themselves to be overwhelmed. Mr. Wilder writes to his family at the time of the sad crisis in his business affairs:

"In taking up my pen to address you under the sudden and sad reverse of fortune which has overtaken me, I am led to inquire of myself if it is imagination, or if there is reality in what I have to communicate.

"The intelligence by the steamer just arrived from Europe is most gloomy and appalling, so far as relates to my operations.

"I desire to bow with submission to the divine will, and so far as I am individually concerned, I could, I think, by the grace of God assisting, support the unexpected reverse, if I can demonstrate to the world that I have been actuated by that integrity of intention and high sense of honor which I have always endeavored should characterize all my actions.

"May we find grace to be supported under this truly afflicting dispensation of Providence. May we humbly acquiesce in his just decrees, and exclaim with pious David, 'Bless the Lord, O my

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soul, and forget not all his benefits,' which he has so liberally heretofore bestowed.

"My great aim and object will be to pay every demand in full; and then, if an humble retreat remain to us, may our diminished influence still be exerted in promoting that blessed cause of our divine Redeemer which I fear we too much neglected in the days of our prosperity."

Mr. Wilder's expressions of regret concerning his family in this connection are of too tender interest to bring before the public in any guise. Let the reader imagine all that is most unselfish and most affectionate in this respect, and which, in times of joy as well as sorrow, must in these pages be among the "lines left out."

Mr. Wilder's example was indeed a legacy more truly valuable than houses and lands could be. His was a practical illustration that "man does not live by bread alone;" that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance which he possesseth." At the outset of his financial difficulties, with a humility for which he had not always obtained credit, he acknowledged himself to his correspondents as having been mistaken in judgment, and in various calculations as to business matters, and although ready at times, like Jacob, to exclaim, "All these things are against me;" "I have no friends, only acquaintances," this mistake also was soon confessed. All friends worthy the name proved true. The darkness attending Mr. Wilder's financial losses but brought out more clearly many

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"stars of light," true "sons of consolation," faithful also in counsel, as let the two subjoined letters testify:

"JULY 12, 1841.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—I have met you this time under very peculiar circumstances. The Lord has laid his hand heavily upon you. It is, I trust, to teach you some new lessons of heavenly wisdom. Be a submissive, patient, a docile learner. Pray for grace to be so. Let the world sink very low in your estimation. Let Christ be all in all to you. Consecrate yourself and yours anew and entirely to his service. Carry out your noble purpose of sacrificing every thing, if necessary, to fulfil the stern demands of right. Look forward to brighter and happier days than you have ever yet seen, and to eminent usefulness in the cause of the Redeemer. The Lord bless you and yours.

"Yours in the bonds of Christian affection and an unalterable friendship,

"T. H. GALLAUDET."

"NEW YORK, July 13, 1842.

"MY DEAR AND VERY RESPECTED FRIEND—We all noticed the vacancy occasioned by your absence at our May anniversaries, where you had long occupied a prominent and honorable position; and your letter to the Tract Society anniversary, containing your resignation as its presiding officer, was heard by a large assembly with no ordinary emotions. You assigned as one reason for retiring from that station, the revulsion which had taken place in your temporal concerns. In this occurrence we cordially sympathize, and I am fully persuaded that it is the rod of a Father, that it is administered in love, and that it is designed for and will issue in your spiritual profit. Because we are *vines*, the great Husbandman is careful to prune, that our fruit may be improved both in quality and quantity; because we are *gold*, he throws us into the fire, not to consume, but that we may come forth more pure; because we are *children*, he corrects, but the rod which he applies is broken from the 'tree of life;' and in

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this light I trust you are enabled to contemplate the present dispensation.

"I believe, my dear friend, that in taking a retrospective view, you have the consolation that your life has been spent in promoting the interests of your Master and of your generation, and I believe that you will meet many in the everlasting kingdom who were brought there through your instrumentality. The *precious seed* which you have been long and liberally scattering in this country and other countries, cherished by the rain of the divine Spirit, will spring up, yielding a rich harvest in the salvation of many; and surely this consideration may support you under the sudden reverse of circumstances. If you and I have our own souls for a prey, we owe a debt to free, sovereign, unmerited, abounding grace, which eternity will be short enough to pay; and are we not doubly honored if a sovereign God employs us as instruments for promoting the salvation of others? May not these reflections reconcile us to every vicissitude of life? May they not constrain us with David in the hour of his adversity to resolve, 'I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be continually in my mouth;' 'I will sing of mercy and of judgment;' believing that when he smiles it is in mercy, and when he smites it is in mercy. Why should the heir, while in his minority, be moved by occasional privations, when he expects soon to be in the full possession of the inheritance; or the pilgrim be alarmed at the gathering storm, when his Father's house is in view, and he has the prospect of shortly reaching it?

"I often recollect with pleasure the memorable hours which we have spent in the sanctuary of your domicil, mingling our hearts and voices in devotional exercises, and also deliberating in our benevolent societies on the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom; and I look forward with joyful anticipation to that period when, through the riches of reigning grace, our fellowship will become still more intimate and enduring and uninterrupted. Then every 'crook in our lot,' seen in the light of immortality, will appear straight, and every mystery of his providence and grace be unfolded to our full satisfaction. That this may be the attainment of you

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and yours, with me and mine, when the days of our mourning shall be ended, is the prayer of your friend in the common Saviour, and obliged servant,

"ALEXANDER PROUDFIT."

Dr. Proudfit adverts to Mr. Wilder's having resigned the presidency of the American Tract Society. From his inability now to contribute to the funds of various societies, and other considerations, and in order to open the way for other men whose general influence for good might be greater than his, Mr. Wilder, "notwithstanding many remonstrances," gave up the many places of trust and honor he had held as trustee, executor, or as officer in the Tract and other societies. His motives in taking this course were above suspicion; but the course itself may have implied too much importance as attached to the mere actual possession of wealth as a qualification for office-bearing in these associations.

It may also be noticed that Dr. Gallaudet in his letter refers to Mr. Wilder's noble purpose to "sacrifice every thing, if necessary, to fulfil the sternest demands of right." By at once putting his property into the hands of assignees, for the benefit of his creditors, Mr. Wilder sought to secure their interests in a manner fair and equitable to each and all.

At one time, hearing of some dissatisfaction respecting this course, which with the best intentions he had pursued, he earnestly requested several gentlemen of high standing to investigate and

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report upon his affairs. He knew of no hidden matters that could not bear the light; but it was difficult to secure the time and attention of men who, from position and character, were alone qualified to judge in such a case.

And through scenes of more than ordinary trial, as connected with loss of property, Mr. Wilder was also called to pass; as he would sometimes afterwards write, "I know what it is to tread in the courts of kings, and in *the courts of a prison.*" It fell out in this wise: Mr. Wilder's prominence in the early efforts of the temperance cause has been shown. This led to some ill-will towards him on the part of some whose body and soul destroying "craft" had through his means been endangered. Some of these men having come indirectly into possession of a southern draft on Mr. Wilder for $1,500, took advantage of some technicalities in the laws of Massachusetts regarding debtors, and forthwith had him "cast into prison."

At the first intimation that this might be done, Mr. Wilder wrote, "Rather than do an act of injustice to lenient creditors by paying, even if it were in my power, a coercive creditor, I am willing 'to go both unto prison and to death;' nor will I assent, for the sake of avoiding a prison, to take the required oath that 'I am not in possession, nor have under my control, nor do I possess to the value of twenty dollars,' when the very glasses to which I must have recourse to sign the oath are worth more money. Conscious of the purity of my motives and

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of the integrity of my intentions, I shall tread the courts of a prison with as little cost to my personal feelings as I have heretofore trod the courts of emperors and kings."

This was indeed a dark hour; but from the scene of sorrow and imprisonment what strange, unexpected sounds are these we hear. Songs of praises to our God! the voice of prayer and thanksgiving! Mr. Wilder had scarcely "lighted," as did Bunyan, "upon a certain place where was a den," when he interested those about him in a prayer-meeting. This was attended daily with increasing good results; and in various labors for the souls of others, Mr. Wilder at times almost forgot his imprisonment. He writes:

"WORCESTER JAIL, August 15, 1842.

"DEAREST AMIE—Yesterday was the most solemn and interesting Sabbath I have yet been permitted to witness in this place. My text in the morning was the fourth chapter of Ephesians, thirtieth verse; and by particular request I had engaged, the week before, to give my views in the afternoon on Millerism, which had taken deep root in this town. I selected for my text the thirteenth chapter of St. Mark, tenth to thirty-second and thirty-third verses. At an early hour the apartment began to fill, and finally the crowd was so great as not to find room to put another bench, and many could not be admitted that had come.

"I really began to wish for our good minister, or some one more able and better qualified than myself to occupy the attention of the many intelligent looking gentlemen and ladies present, and in vain did I endeavor to put the harness on to 'the learned blacksmith,' or some one of the half dozen deacons who were present, but 'no,' was the reply. My gray hairs, I presume, rather than any other qualification, led the good deacons to decline so responsible a station, and

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I had to yield to the necessity of the case; and after occupying the attention of this intelligent auditory for more than an hour, I was followed by the learned blacksmith and Deacon Washburn, who riveted the attention of the auditory for half an hour longer; after which, the vilest of the vile and the hardest of the hard, whom a few days since a *word* from that dear Amie had, by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, struck under conviction, rose and acknowledged himself a vile sinner and justly deserving the eternal wrath of God, and desired that a special prayer might be offered in his behalf.

"After the prayer was offered, one of the young women, an inmate of the establishment, rose and expressed a hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, having for a month past found this divine Saviour to be precious to her soul. She was followed by another convict, who said he felt more than he was able to express, but commended himself to our prayers.

"As several had, since a few days, expressed a wish to have family prayers every evening, I then put the question, and requested those to rise who were in favor of daily prayers to ascend from their cells, and what was my surprise and delight to see them *all* arise, except one drunkard who came in the day before, and from whose pores the alcohol was still oozing out.

"Thus is established a family altar, and the regular monthly concert of prayer, with two services on the Sabbath, where a few weeks since, nothing but oaths, light talk, and worldly songs were heard; and without pretending to say that we have a general revival of religion, it must be admitted that we have been refreshed by a few mercy drops, but *not, not unto the dear deacons, not unto my poor self*, but unto God alone be all the praise, all the honor, all the glory.

"In order to accommodate from one hundred and fifty to two hundred persons of a Sabbath, Mr. Matthews has proposed to the commissioner to take down at his own expense the walls between the entry and three west chambers; so that if my life holds out a few months longer, my audience will be so increased as to require an able pastor, rather than a miserable, inefficient layman like myself.

"S. V. S. W."

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Within these closed doors, Mr. Wilder himself first learned the beautiful melody attached to the hymn,

"When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the skies,"

with its inspiriting refrain,

"Oh, that will be joyful,
To meet to part no more
On Canaan's happy shore;
And there to sit
At Jesus' feet,
And meet to part no more."

This hymn, thus sung, ever after remained a special favorite; and was among the last heard and almost joined in by him in the hour of death. Strange reminiscence this of prison life.

"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Did not our God remember this his word unto his servant?

Mr. Wilder's friends far and near, as might be expected—Mr. John Tappan, Mr. Hottinguer, and others—exerted themselves promptly for his immediate release; the former offering a large gratuity, $500, irrespective of the debt, which friends stood ready to cancel, in order to secure his freedom without delay. But an unexpected obstacle presented itself: Mr. Wilder was determined, against all the entreaties of his friends, to let the law take its course.

The reasons he opposed to repeated remonstrances and solicitations were in a measure valid, though tinged perhaps, in some degree, with the romance

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pertaining to his character. He was willing to yield himself "a sacrifice, if it would lead to the abolition of a 'Goth and Vandal' law respecting debtors;" he wished that all "his creditors should be treated alike, and share alike," and feared lest "ruthless men should secure undue advantage" over those "more lenient." He said to his friends again, "You surely will not be so unwise as to treat with these men while holding me in confinement, and thereby virtually offer a premium to other creditors to go and do likewise." And will it not be forgiven if, like Paul and Silas, feeling that he had been unjustly imprisoned, he would not be "thrust out privily;" but rather that those who had thus treated him "should come themselves and fetch him out?"

Yet while refusing relief for himself, Mr. Wilder eagerly sought it in behalf of others whose misfortune it was to be in like case with himself; and in bringing release to some and spiritual improvement to others, he no doubt considered himself more than compensated for this deep descent into the valley of humility.

Freedom came before long in the way for which Mr. Wilder had waited, and the only one quite satisfactory. At the request of his rum-dealing creditors, he was released at the end of several weeks, but not until his complexion had begun to pale and his health somewhat to suffer. His incarcerators made many apologies, saying they had labored under wrong impressions. Mr. Wilder freely forgave them, as well as the young lawyer, whom he termed

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"inexperienced," who had recommended to his clients their unjustifiable proceedings.

It was ever a source of gratification to Mr. Wilder that his home estate in Massachusetts passed into the hands of a gentleman of enlarged views and estimable character, who carried out his views regarding it so far as possible.

Time rolled on without essential improvement in Mr. Wilder's business prospects. In 1845 he removed his residence from Bolton to New York. Here he lived for a short time in Fourth-street, and afterwards in Amity-place. The years 1850–51 he spent in Greenwich, Conn., where, during the summer months, he had the society of his son-in-law J. B. Sheffield, Esq., and family. In 1852 he went to Elizabeth, N. J., where also he was in the neighborhood of relatives and friends.

From 1854 onwards, Mr. Wilder passed nearly half the year—the warm season—at White Lake in Sullivan county, N. Y.; and thus, without much excitement or variety, the quiet years moved on. Supported on the one side by a consciousness of high integrity, and on the other by sincere reliance on the love and wisdom of the God of providence, he watched the progress of events, at times strangely hopeful that, especially from some Southern property, enough might be realized to meet every liability. But so it seemed not good in the eyes of his heavenly Father. Patience was to have its perfect work. From letters written by Mr. Wilder in 1854 and 1860 we give the following:

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"We must be as willing to acquiesce in the just decrees of Providence, as we are ready to rejoice in his blessings, knowing that he ruleth in the army of heaven, and doeth his good pleasure among the sons of men."

"Really we must acknowledge that, notwithstanding our descent into the valley of humility, yet the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places; and we doubt not that the sacred records of eternity will unfold to our acquiescent view that all things are ordered in mercy respecting us."

Who can doubt this, and that even

"Now as, through grace, his journey through,
Of life he takes a bird's-eye view
From near the throne of God,
Mountains of ill all disappear,
Raised but to guard with love sincere
The path unknowing trod?"

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XIX.

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Psalm 103 : 4.

Was it not because of its singular appropriateness to his own case, that the one hundred and third Psalm was with Mr. Wilder such a favorite portion of Scripture? In it David seemed most satisfactorily to express the feelings of gratitude and praise ever through grace springing up as a well of water from Mr. Wilder's own heart. Of him it might truly be said,

"His life, of strange,
Continuous change,
For years did give him widest range
On land and o'er the sea;
Experience
That Providence
Had been his guide and sure defence,
His heart's song seemed to be."

Wonderful deliverances from danger were among the marked events of his career. We have learned of that wild sea-storm which "fixed his choice" to make a public profession of religion. He writes also of icebergs barely escaped, of detentions among the fogs near Newfoundland, dangerous still even in these days of improved steam navigation; being long becalmed, with short allowance of water, upon a glassy sea near Portugal. And what life,

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even that of a stranger, was safe during the waves and tumults of more than one French revolution, of whose scenes Mr. Wilder was eye-witness?

To robbers also he was more than once exposed. On one occasion the diligence or stage-coach having met with some accident, Mr. Wilder was obliged to walk to the next town or village. This was in some remote district of France. Not knowing the road, he inquired respecting it of two apparently decent and respectable laboring men passing near. They offered to put him in the right way, but on the contrary were taking him off some by-path into a wood, saying this was by far the nearest course; when, sent by Providence as Mr. Wilder always felt, a Paris friend, one whom he was surprised to see in such a place, met him just in time. "How now, Mr. Wilder; which way?" Mr. Wilder gave the name of the place where he wished to go. "You are wrong, my friend, quite wrong; my relatives live there; follow me." And said this gentleman, when he had the opportunity, "Do you know, Mr. Wilder, you were in great danger? Those men are complete outlaws."

Among other special providences which Mr. Wilder felt had often guarded his way, the following is given in his own words.

"About the year 1807, during the period that the English were blockading all the ports of France, an American vessel was loading at Bordeaux, which had obtained a special license to proceed from thence to America. Being in Paris at the time, and wishing to proceed to America on important

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business, I wrote to Bordeaux to ascertain if I could be accommodated with a berth as passenger, and wishing to be informed on what day, wind and weather permitting, the vessel would put to sea. Having received the required answer, I started forthwith with a view to embark on the day fixed for sailing, hoping to reach Bordeaux two or three days in advance. But in consequence of deep ruts and bad roads, I was eight days on the route, yet still in time to reach the vessel on the day fixed for putting to sea, had not an axletree of the diligence broke seven miles before reaching the city, which detained us upwards of six hours.

"Judge of my disappointment, on arriving the same day at four o'clock P. M., on being told by the consignee of the vessel that the captain, having waited several hours and not hearing from me, and wind and tide being favorable, had left the river one hour before my arrival. Judge, I repeat, of my disappointment, after having passed eight days and nights on the road, without much sleep or rest, to find the vessel sailed, and no other in port with permission to leave for America without the risk of violating the blockade.

"Nothing remained for me but to return, through mud and mire, four hundred miles, to Paris, really considering myself the most unfortunate of men.

"Man proposes, and God disposes; and how inscrutable are his ways, and how willing should we be, at all times and under all circumstances, to acquiesce in his just decrees. The vessel in question was never heard from, nor the captain, officers, or any of the crew."

Mr. Wilder met with a similar experience by land. On a certain journey in England, when particularly anxious to make some special connection, a man passing just before him into the office, secured the very last seat of the only stage going forward that day. Mr. Wilder was greatly tried. He was obliged to wait another day. Arriving the third day at the next post-town, what should he and his

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fellow-travellers meet but a long funeral procession following nine coffins in a row. The coach which Mr. Wilder had been so anxious to take was overturned down some embankment, and nine passengers, among them the man occupying the seat Mr. Wilder had wished to have, lost their lives.

In this country also Mr. Wilder met with deliverances from special danger. He was thrown from a coach in the Green Mountains, near Somerset, Vt., where he was interested in some iron mines, and for some time after suffered in his head from the concussion. Again, in old age, at White Lake, in some way he fell backward from an open wagon, yet he was "borne up" from serious injury.

Not special providences alone, but that constant guidance he had ever received through life, was with Mr. Wilder a frequent theme of gratitude. He would say, "What a string of providences, against my will and wish, and without any merit of my own, have, through the goodness of the Lord, guided me all the way through this world of mutability."

When urged to write some account of his life, he would say, "I could convey but an imperfect idea of the reminiscences and events which shaped my earthly career."

In reply to some solicitation of the kind, he wrote, "I feel a reluctance in responding to your reiterated wishes, from the consideration that there is nothing in my unprofitable life that would justify having recourse to the personal pronoun to the extent which I should feel compelled to do in order to

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exhibit a bird's-eye view of my earthly career, and at the same time render unto the God of all grace the praises and thanksgivings justly due to this my earthly and heavenly Benefactor for all his mercies conferred upon me from my birth to the present moment of my existence. In the mean time, allow me to exclaim, in the language of Helen Maria Williams,

"'When all thy mercies, Oh my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

In each event of life, how clear
Thy ruling hand I see;
Each blessing to my soul most dear,
Because conferred by thee.'"

Yes, the words of this hymn seemed to Mr. Wilder ever a sufficient answer, when he was urged to prepare a more complete account of his course than the narratives he sometimes consented to give regarding some particular incident or event.

May the present incomplete records, gathered so imperfectly from various written sources and from the memory of friends, answer in a measure the same purpose as those Mr. Wilder might himself have prepared. May the effect of them harmonize with and carry out the great desire of his heart, that sinners may be converted to that Saviour who to him proved so faithful and so true, that Christians may be inspirited with fresh faith and hope, and that in all and through all God alone may be glorified.

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XX.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season. 2 Tim. 4: 2.

THE power of speaking a word for Christ; how is the loving heart, the tact, the courage in which such a faculty consists, to be desired and sought after. Mr. Wilder's was a bright example in this respect. Seldom withdrawing from social intercourse, winning the hearts of all by kindness and friendly sympathy, tempering his dignity of manner by flashes of occasional humor in his conversation in a way peculiarly his own, he gained a noble vantage-ground from which to sound a note of warning or of invitation. Such was his bearing and deportment, that it seemed but natural to hear him speak of God and things divine.

Mr. Wilder said truly, as has been noted, that from the time he "stepped into the broad aisle to confess Christ before men, he was never ashamed to own his cause; nor did he again know what it was to fear the face of man."

Mr. Lewis Tappan gives his early impressions of him: "Mr. Wilder was firm as a rock in his evangelical sentiments. I remember seeing him, during one of his visits to the United States while he resided in Paris, in my brother John's pew at Dr. Channing's, pointing out to him very significantly

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a verse omitted in the reading by Dr. Channing, which seemed to make Christ coëqual with the Father. He appeared to have more decision and boldness, and more sensitiveness to error, than his religious friends in this country manifested at the time. It was quite natural, for he had associated in Europe with ministers of decided evangelical character, while many of his friends in this country were at the same time under the ministrations of men who were either in the dark on the subject of evangelical religion, or were endeavoring to hide the light from their parishioners. Although I did not at the time sympathize with Mr. Wilder in religious matters, I respected his fearlessness in avowing sentiments he believed to be true."

This fearlessness appears in some of his letters to various individuals. To a friend and neighbor he wrote, March, 1825,

"My dear Captain—I regret that my letter of yesterday should have caused you a moment's uneasiness, or that you should have given yourself the trouble even to reply to it. You know that we are commanded to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. You, my dear sir, have ever proved yourself to be my neighbor in every sense of the word; and it is that love I bear to you, that affection I cherish, and that friendship I profess which induced me to hand you the volume of sermons and my letter of yesterday. We are commanded to do to others as we would that others should do to us. Were either of us to see a friend or neighbor blindfolded going off a precipice, would it not be our duty to take him by the arm, and warn him of his danger? If so, and we see him by our views, spiritually blinded, going into the ditch of destruction, ought our Christian charity to extend so far as

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to yield assent to his views, and thereby facilitate his progress; or ought this love and duty to constrain us to warn him of his danger, even at the risk of being considered by him uncharitable?

"My good friend, a few years, perhaps months or days, and *time* for you and me will be for ever at an end, and *eternity* will have commenced. We must be faithful in a spiritual, as we have been in a temporal point of view to each other. We have been seeking happiness in this life. We undoubtedly desire it in the life which is to come. Your approving of and advocating the principles contained in the volume of sermons written by the Rev. Dr. B——, which you sent me yesterday, excites my alarm for your future and eternal welfare; and I cannot think that our friend and spiritual guide, the Rev. Mr. A——, has ever perused all the sermons contained in that volume, or he never would have presented it to the 'Social Library' for distribution among his people.

"With all the Christian charity possible, I must confess that I consider the perusal of several of the sermons contained in that volume to have a more dangerous tendency, as respects the salvation of immortal souls, than the works of the late infamous Tom Paine; and would it be prudent or judicious for our good friend Mr. A—— to offer a candid opinion, I would most willingly submit the correctness of my assertion to his decision.

"As you have, my dear sir, kindly stated to me your religious belief, and what constitutes your hope for a heavenly inheritance, and as we are commanded to be 'ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear,' allow me, in obedience to this command, to state that my hope for future salvation is by a true and living *faith* in the blessed merits and mediation, the blood and righteousness, and the atoning sacrifice of a *divine* and crucified Redeemer, and an endeavor, by the aid of the all-powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, to manifest this *faith* by a corresponding conduct.

"Whatever may be the difference in our views with regard to the road which conducts the immortal soul from earth to

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heaven, I can, my dear sir, and do most cordially reciprocate all your kind expressions in my behalf, praying that we may both find grace to lead us in the paths of truth, and at length enable us to reach in peace the happy mansions of endless rest.

"Truly I am, my dear sir, your obedient, humble servant,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

It would be difficult to separate Mr. Wilder's letters into the two classes of secular and religious, thoughts of God and heaven were so interwoven with his every action. Business letters would close as for illustration:

"We have a glorious revival. Pray for us. As the vessel sails in a few minutes, there is not time for further remark. Truly,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

Another example of this is implied in a rejoinder, in a postscript to a letter from a business friend:

"P. S. Allow me to request that you will not, in letters of business, allude to the prayers of my deceased mother."

"In season, out of season;" is not this the command? Even incongruity of time or place, by attracting more attention to a word spoken for Jesus, may be overruled for good. That mother's prayers have long since been answered. Her son became a distinguished advocate of evangelical truth. A long letter, specifying his reasons for change of sentiment, was published, and several thousand copies of it circulated.

While in Ware, Mr. Wilder commenced in his

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family a custom borrowed from the Northampton paternal home of his friend John Tappan, Esq.; that of having each person at table repeat a text of Scripture at breakfast, directly after the blessing was asked. It was astonishing to see to what perplexity even some learned theologians were reduced when thus suddenly called upon for their portion. Verses too were often quite misquoted. This habit of repeating texts was maintained by Mr. Wilder, with more or less regularity, for a number of years, and on the whole with good effect. Mr. Wilder usually made his selections appropriate to the passing occasion, though frequently falling back on his oft-repeated favorite texts: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Mr. Wilder's modes of giving were sometimes peculiar. It was not easy for him to restrain his propensity to study human nature in various circumstances.

A good Moravian minister coming to him one day for help for a church, Mr. Wilder told him to go first to a distinguished German millionaire of the place, with whom Mr. Wilder was well acquainted, and then return. The minister came back to Mr. Wilder with a ten dollar donation from the rich man. Mr. Wilder immediately subscribed the same. "Now go back," said he, "to Mr. ——; say to him he has been the cause of your losing thirty dollars. I had intended to give you fifty dollars, but cannot

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think, being in comparatively moderate circumstances, of putting my name under his for a larger sum than he can afford to give." It is not certain that the Moravian minister carried the message; it is more so, that Mr. Wilder did not finally allow the church to lose the subscription from himself he at first proposed to make.

Sometimes declining himself to give to an object, on the plea perhaps of numerous calls, or of having of late contributed to the same cause, while the applicant faintly smiled in acquiescence, it pleased Mr. Wilder to see the sudden change to a genuine expression of satisfaction as he added, "but my little daughter there," or "that boy who has the misfortune to bear my name, has something for you." That boy, that only son, what dreams of usefulness and happiness, of schemes of benevolence to be carried out by him in after years, in which work during his short life on earth his father so much delighted to have him seem to take part, by giving extra donations to various objects in his name—how did these all perish in his early grave. Nor was the dear child's benevolence merely by proxy. His little heart was full of love. In his last sickness his thoughts were upon building houses for some poor families recently burned out in the neighborhood. Surely there is a place, a life above, where such budding lives, seemingly incomplete on earth, blossom into noblest perfection of being.

At the time of the revival in Charleston, S. C., a young lady was first introduced to Mr. Wilder in

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her ball-dress, while her mother and sisters were preparing to attend an evening meeting, being deeply interested in the revival. It struck him sadly that she should show such levity, and he requested her, when led upon the floor to take her part in the dance, to reflect seriously upon her course, and to remember how soon the gay scene would be changed to mourning, to death, and to the grave. It seems his words were not forgotten; she did not enjoy the company, and to his surprise and joy, she was observed, an evening or two afterwards, among those who were seeking an interest in the Saviour. She came to Mr. Wilder, thanked him for his faithfulness, and is believed subsequently to have honored her profession.'

Mr. Wilder's ideas as to the amusements of dancing, card-playing, the opera, and the theatre, were what is called old-fashioned. Were they necessarily incorrect? Let Christians beware, in these latter days, lest the fear of making needless restrictions, or of by opposition giving factitious importance to these recreations, or even lest latent worldliness should lead them to trifle with the instinct of wrong with which the Lord has long hedged about his church in relation to these amusements.

A nephew says, "About the time that uncle had those early meetings in his library in Bolton, at which I was often present, there was going to be a ball, which I intended to attend. I went to tell uncle of it, merely to see what he would say. 'Well,' said he, 'there must be a great deal of pleasure to

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an immortal being in just hopping from one foot to another;' saying this in such a way as, in my state of mind, just becoming interested in divine things, was just suited to impress me. I went to the ball, danced a few times, but was so miserable I soon left, and have never danced again."

As a match-picture to that of Mr. Wilder and the young lady in Charleston, was an anecdote he often related of his friend Dr. Nettleton and a young lady in New Jersey. It was in this distinguished evangelist's palmy days, when fully engaged in revival scenes with such remarkable success:

Dr. Nettleton had come from the evening service in some country town to his home for the night. The good lady of the house, rather an elderly person, after bustling about to provide her guest with refreshments, said directly before her daughter, a young lady of seventeen or eighteen, who was in the room, "Dr. Nettleton, I do wish you would talk to Caroline. She don't care nothing about going to meeting, nor about the salvation of her soul. I've talked and talked, and got our minister to talk, but it don't seem to do no good. I wish you would talk to her, Dr. Nettleton." Saying which, and more, she soon went out of the room.

Dr. Nettleton continued quietly taking his repast, when he turned round to the young girl and said, "Now just tell me, Miss Caroline, don't they bother you amazingly about this thing?" She, taken by surprise at an address so unexpected, answered at once, "Yes, sir, they *do;* they keep talking to me all the time, till I am just sick of it. If they would let me alone, I dare say I should do a great deal better." "So I thought," said Dr. Nettleton. "Let's see, how old are you?" "Eighteen, sir." "Good health?" "Yes, sir." "The fact is," said Dr. Nettleton, "religion is a good thing in itself; but the idea of all the time troubling a young creature like you with it; and you're in good health, you say

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Religion *is* a good thing. It will hardly do to die without it. I wonder how long it would do for you to wait?" "That 's just what I 've been thinking myself," said Miss Caroline.

"Well," said Dr. Nettleton, "suppose you say till you are fifty? No, that wont do; I attended a funeral the other day of a lady fifteen years younger than that. Thirty? How will that do?" "I am not sure it would do to wait quite so long," said Miss Caroline. "No, I do not think so either; something might happen. See now, twenty-five? or even twenty, if we could only be sure you would live so long. A year from now; how would that do?" "I do n't know, sir." "Neither do I. The fact is, my dear young lady, the more I think of it, and of how young people, as well apparently as you are, do sometimes die suddenly, the more I am afraid to have you put it off a moment longer. Besides, the Bible says, '*Now* is the accepted time.' It is really the only time we can be sure of, and when we can expect the blessing of God's Holy Spirit; for we cannot convert ourselves; it is God's work. We must take his time. What shall we do? Had we not better kneel right down here, and ask God for mercy through his Son Jesus Christ?"

The blessing of the Holy Spirit accompanied these words. The young lady, perfectly overcome by her feelings, kneeled on the spot. Within a day or two she by grace came out rejoicing in hope, finding that she had far from lost all enjoyment even in this life.

On one occasion, when stopping at a country tavern, Mr. Wilder inquired about the minister of the place. The landlord, who it seems was also deacon in the church, answered that their minister had recently deceased. "An excellent man he was, sir; lived among us forty years and more; has married and buried us all; an excellent, good man." "And how about his family?" said Mr. Wilder. "Oh, he leaves a widder and six children; nice woman she is: not over-pert; nice woman though." "And is she left comfortably off?" said Mr. Wilder. "Why, as to that," said the deacon, "I do not like to say. It does not do to praise yourself; but as you are a stranger, sir, I will say that we have done the thing hand

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some by her. There 's Mr. ——, he took one of the boys that was big enough, to help him on the farm. The widder, she 's gone to her sister's in the next town." "But what did you do for her?" said Mr. Wilder, "Well, sir, I will tell you;" and as if apologizing for some extravagance, he continued, "You see he was such an excellent, good man—so, on the whole, we concluded to *continue his salary for three months* after his death." "Well, really," said Mr. Wilder, "I am astonished at your treatment of this worthy family."

Where do any American citizens get such contracted notions as were revealed in this blinded self-complacency?

Mr. Wilder, in common with other Christians, took an interest in the rising fortunes of the colored race, and would relate the following experience he had in Georgia in 1832, as proof of their native capacity and originality in the way of public speaking, which, if properly educated, would give them much power in preaching the gospel.

"Having responded to the kind invitation of a distinguished Southern planter to visit his estates, located about twelve miles from Savannah, I was invited by my host on the Sabbath morning to address a few words of exhortation to his people, numbering some four hundred and eighty, who were then assembled, waiting our arrival. On reaching the place of worship, we found the pulpit occupied by one of his colored people, an elderly man, who suspended his address upon our entrance; but I requested our host to beckon to him to proceed. On resuming his discourse, he observed:

"'Vell, my Christian friends, I was a going to say, as most of you keep hens and chickens, you all know that so long as de little chick keeps near its

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mother it finds something to eat; but when he think he know better, and strays away from its mother, as is often de case, it not only finds nothing to eat, but de *hawk* do come and pick him up. And just so it is with us, my dear friends. So long as we keep near de foot of de cross of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, so long we do find spiritual nourishment for our souls; but when we think we know better, and we stray away, we not only find no spiritual food, but Satan do come and pick us up.'

"The speaker continued in a strain of natural eloquence well suited to the comprehension of his audience, and far better calculated to impress their minds with the sacred truths of the gospel than any elaborate discourse by a merely erudite preacher. For myself, I was so truly surprised, delighted, and edified, that it was with extreme reluctance I assented to follow, even in a few words, a discourse so truly admirable, fearing to detract from the good effect already so evidently produced."

Many no doubt remember something of the sad imposture of Matthias, about thirty years ago, one of the "false Christs" which our Saviour foretold would arise in the latter days. Through his machinations a number of really good people, by not clinging closely to the word of God as a rock of defence against all error, drifted away to the destruction of character, of property, and, in at least one case, of life itself.

Mr. E—— P——, a sincere and estimable man, then well known, was among the number thus car-

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ried away by this impostor; and again and again he urged Mr. Wilder to come to his house and judge for himself of Matthias and his pretensions. Mr. Wilder finally consented to go, grieved at heart that a man of Mr. P——'s apparently good, plain common-sense and humble piety should be left to fall into such delusion, but hoping to do him good.

On Mr. Wilder's arrival, no one was in the parlor but Mr. P——, who went up to ask Matthias to come down. Some little stir was then heard overhead. A figure descended the stairs, passed into the back room, which was fitted up, as to furniture, somewhat like a small chapel. It appeared in the open space under the folding-door arrayed in a semi-oriental style, intended to be impressive.

Mr. Wilder made no motion to advance. Matthias drew nearer, and held out his hand. Mr. Wilder, rather drawing his own hand back, addressed him,

"Sir, if you are He you pretend to be, I am not worthy to shake hands with you; and if you are not, you are not worthy to shake hands with me."

Mr. Wilder was disgusted with the appearance and manners and wickedness of the man, and soon withdrew.

"In season, out of season," Mr. Wilder seems to have been ready to speak a word in his Master's honor. In the steam-boat, the car, the omnibus, the country stage-coach, he was wont to make such remarks as these:

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"We are all on our way travelling through this wilderness world; shall we meet at last in heaven?"

"There are but two ways in this life: one right, the other wrong. Let us see to it that we take the first, or we are lost for time and for eternity."

"Here we are on our way from time to eternity," was his inscription in a way-side album.

As time passed on, bringing venerable old age, it was considered by him a new talent to be used in his Redeemer's service, enabling him to make remarks and give personal advice to young people such as they might have been less ready to receive but for what the Scriptures call "a crown of glory" in that beautiful "hoary head."

A devoted admirer of beauty, while pleasing the young by his compliments, he would give suddenly, now and then, a home thrust not easily forgotten, with his quick sense of the ludicrous touching off the follies of fashion and fashionable life.

How often was he called upon for a story, a request generally pleasantly complied with. Nor needed he for this purpose to draw from cisterns of fiction. The wells of truth in his own observation and experience were more than sufficient for this purpose. Some of these narrations have been most imperfectly rendered in these pages; but the look, the tone, the whole effect of Mr. Wilder's manner of relating them, are not here, as from gay tints he passed to graver shades, yet all harmoniously under the toning of presiding religious principle.

Few have been more beloved and revered than

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he; few have left in their day and generation a more permanent general impress for good.

A neighbor coming in to look at him while sleeping life away in his last sickness, said, "Dear Mr. Wilder, I never met him but he had something good to say. The last time I saw him was at the dépôt. After some inquiry about my health, he observed, 'Well, Mrs. ——, we shall never be quite right until we get to heaven.'" Truly said, truly felt, and now no doubt truly and for ever realized.

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XXI.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not. Prov. 27:10.

Mr. Wilder's correspondence through his mercantile life was necessarily a large one. Habits thus acquired were not easily discontinued, and during his latter years, letter writing became to him a pleasant employment and recreation.

A valued friend writes, "Mr. Wilder seemed to belong to the Elizabethan rather than the present prosaic age." From early years his style in writing was highly typical of his character: ornate, yet to the point; redundant, yet terse and direct if occasion required; and seldom repetitious, each additional word being there with a purpose, defining or amplifying the leading idea. Seldom did his power of consecutive thought show itself more than when, on account of failing physical power, he "was obliged," as he would say, "to have recourse to the obliging disposition of an amiable amanuensis;" for he was able to dictate long and involved paragraphs without repetition; and seldom losing the grammatical connection. In letters written by himself in advanced years, his penmanship appears clear and beautiful almost as ever.

Mr. Wilder never destroyed a letter or manuscript. By this means, many facts have been gath-

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ered relating to his history, otherwise irretrievably lost.

Music was a delight to him, and none but that of superior execution could satisfy him. When thus superior, either vocal or instrumental, he became enthusiastic, as many who found him a most appreciative auditor even in old age, will well remember.

But the songs of Zion were those that best satisfied his heart. In a few favorite old melodies he was himself able to join, seemingly at times almost "called away from flesh and sense," in the upward aspirations of "Amsterdam," or the joyful hallelujah's of "The voice of free grace." "In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" alone, did he find the true sublimity suiting his grand and simple tastes.

With his warm heart, Mr. Wilder never forgot a friend; even remembering with interest those whose only claim was a local one, that of being neighbors, those especially of his native place. Neither "his own friend," nor "his father's friend" were forsaken. His kindness to the old gentleman, Mr. Flagg, has been noticed. For another contemporary of his father, he in 1858 "resolved to offer up daily a special prayer for a month, that the remainder of his life might be that of devotion to God." And for those more nearly related, often did he pray that their hearts might be "early imbued with the riches of divine grace."

The names of many of the friends he most loved have received a passing mention in these pages;

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but the shortest record of S. V. S. Wilder would be incomplete did it not refer particularly to his almost life-long friendship with John Tappan, Esq. of Boston, who in prosperity and adversity was a friend indeed. An active correspondence was kept up between them. So dependent was Mr. Wilder upon this kind of intercourse with this friend, that in one of the letters last dictated by himself, he said, that when no new letters from Mr. Tappan came at the time expected, "he was obliged to read over some of the old ones." The mutual love and esteem between Mr. Wilder and his long-known and constant friend Dr. Hallock, was uninterrupted from the time of their first acquaintance in the work of the American Tract Society; and to him especially it is due that these records have been collected. And Dr. Chickering, the once dear young pastor, the faithful correspondent, the reliable friend in death itself. Such kindness cannot be forgotten. Guy Richards, Esq., also was to Mr. Wilder as a brother. To him were Mr. Wilder's last words on earth addressed, "All is well, all is well." What could we wish for more? Such men were among those who, Mr. Wilder would say, "sufficed to reconcile one to human nature."

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XXII.

Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. Isa. 46:4.

A FEW short months ago, in the city of Elizabeth, New Jersey, were three venerated men, Mr. Wilder, his beloved pastor Dr. Magie, and Rev. Mr. Kittle, much endeared to each other, living in one neighborhood, and to be seen almost daily passing to the town and back upon one of its principal avenues.

They are all gone. The walk once so familiar to them, and which in their absence seems to have lost a feature of such suggestive interest, now knows them no more. "Lovely and pleasant in their lives," in death "they were not divided."

Rev. Mr. Kittle, or as he loved to be called, in memory of his pastorates in the Reformed Dutch church, Dominie Kittle, was the first called above. His striking countenance, erect figure, and youthful energy cannot easily be forgotten. Retired from active parochial care, he made his home in Elizabeth, where, as he would sometimes pleasantly report himself at meetings of Classis, he was engaged "in laboring among destitute Presbyterians." It

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was his delight to attend the neighborhood prayer-meetings, and he did much to render them useful and interesting. None can forget his earnest utterance on his favorite topic of God's double gift to the Christian of grace and glory: "Grace is the bud of glory, glory the full perfection of grace." This perfection he has himself received.

Rev. Dr. MAGIE, well named David "the beloved," the pastor with whom Mr. Wilder was so identified, what can be said of him with heart blinded with recent grief in view of his comparatively early departure hence? Few people, few places have met with such a loss as when he, the revered pastor, the sympathizing friend, the reliable counsellor, the type of all that is excellent in man, passed away from earth.

Young men, young ministers, older ministers too, may learn much from the life and character of Dr. Magie. His was ever an upward course, mentally, intellectually, spiritually. His character and reputation well bore the severe test of a seventy years residence in his native place. There, although "in his own country," he year by year received increasing "honor." Marks of deeper study, closer thought, in addition to ever prayerful meditation, together with a more animated delivery, were plainly evident in his latter ministrations. Passages in some sermons never, alas, preached by him to his people, but read to them by his appreciative friend Rev. D. H. Pierson, seemed indeed as if written by a spirit already disjoined from earth, and taking a

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comprehensive and unbiased, yet loving view of its expanding, eternal interests.

Dr. Magie's glowing patriotism seemed to arouse his mental and moral power. No man did more than he by every possible influence to sustain the government in its years of peril. His trust in God that he would secure the right, was a never-failing fountain of consolation to himself and others. No scenes connected with the ministry in our country's Revolutionary struggle, can have been more striking than some during the late war in which Dr. Magie was a prominent figure, as, on occasion of raising the flag he loved over the First Presbyterian church of Elizabeth, he stood on a platform beneath its shadow and that of the ancient trees surrounding, his white locks blown by the breeze, while with strains of patriotism, sincere as eloquent, he inspirited the hearts of the assemblage of citizens below.

Mr. Wilder's large experience of mankind recognized the noble qualities by nature which, in Dr. Magie, had grown up in Christ Jesus, into such rich symmetrical development; and Dr. Magie fully appreciated the excellence and peculiar characteristics of his older friend.

During Mr. Wilder's last sickness, Dr. Magie was too feeble himself to visit him. When Mr. Wilder was told of Dr. Magie's inability even to cross the street to see him, he replied only, "I shall meet him in heaven."

Dr. Magie survived his venerated neighbor but a little more than two months. He died on the

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morning of May 10th, 1865, the fortieth anniversary of the American Tract Society—a Society which they both so much loved, and the interests of which they had both served so acceptably; Dr. Magie having been a member and Chairman of its Publishing Committee for many years.

Never was the loss of a pastor or of a citizen more deeply felt. The heavily draped pulpit and church but faintly expressed the universal mourning felt in and around the city of Elizabeth. Yet was the gloom relieved. The words, "Thy will be done," "Remember the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you," gleamed amid the darkness. Beautiful white flowers, freshly renewed for months by loving hands, about the pulpit, fitly typified his fragrant memory; and were pure emblems too of hoped for resurrection and eternal life: the whole effect closely in unison with the inspired words, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

In a letter to Mr. Wilder, Dr. Magie once wrote, "It is pleasant to me to think of the many of my beloved people safe in the world of glory." Shall not those he left behind be comforted "by the consolation wherewith he was comforted?"

Mr. Wilder also much enjoyed his frequent social intercourse with one so genial and intelligent as Rev. Dr. Nicholas Murray. One of the last acts of Dr. Murray's life, so suddenly closed on earth February 4, 1861, was to call on Mr. Wilder, introducing Pasteur Fische of Paris.

Mr. Wilder lived nearly thirteen years in Eliza-

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beth. Quiet years were these, varied but by an annual migration for the summer months to White Lake, in Sullivan county, New York, or by short visits of a few days or hours to the city of New York, closely adjacent.

Though for a long time it might be said of him, "his natural force was not abated," and at the age of eighty, his eye, before somewhat dim, had its natural sight restored to it; and although he "had been exempt," as he would say, "from most of the ills that usually befall our fellow-men," yet time began to wear upon his frame. By degrees his strength became weakened in the way. His hair, so early gray that his appearance had been long more venerable than his years would warrant, now became bleached to more than silvery whiteness; while yet his complexion remained fresh and fair, almost as in former years. His activity long continued a subject of remark, as well as his intelligent interest in every passing event. It was a period of decline; nay, rather of gradual rising above the busy haunts of younger men, to the heavenly heights upon which his feet now stand.

The yearly visits of Mr. Wilder to the mountain region about White Lake were no doubt of great advantage to his health; and it were difficult to describe how much they were enjoyed by him, and what a source of pleasure his presence there was to others also occupying the White Lake Mansion House. Mr. Wilder, even in old age, enjoyed every thing with so much zest, that the feeling was

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contagious. Here, as he would say, "retired from the world and its entangling charms, its corroding cares and busy interests," he did much to make White Lake the place of health-giving recreation it in many cases proved to be. In all the excursions and amusements of the young people, he long took an animated interest. Religion in him enforced respect truly genuine, yet was it seen to be devoid of gloom. Indeed the whole spirit of the White Lake Mansion House, while Mr. Wilder was there, proved that a truly religious atmosphere was not incompatible with suitable bodily and mental relaxation.

But White Lake life to Mr. Wilder was not one of mere enjoyment, social or religious. Here too there was work to be done for his Redeemer. In the immediate, and even more remote neighborhood of the lake, he became a self-appointed yet gladly recognized colporteur of the American Tract Society; a truly republican change of office this, from that of being its first president. In a letter to a friend who had heard of Mr. Wilder's efforts in this line, he wrote, "This vocation I appreciated more than any other station I have occupied. With a carpet-bag of books and tracts, I visited, with my young and zealous colleague, upwards of a hundred families, offering prayers in their behalf, and disposing, by gift and sale, of large quantities of my store on hand; but whether I was instrumental in advancing the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ in that region, the records of eternity alone will unfold."

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When at White Lake, that excellent lady Mrs. Codwise introduced the custom of Sabbath evening recitations of Scripture and of sacred poetry. The idea struck Mr. Wilder favorably. Although about eighty years of age, he immediately applied himself to commit every week a hymn to memory, which he would repeat at the appointed time with evident enjoyment to himself, and to the wonder and gratification of others. With the very exercise his memory became strengthened even at this advanced age. A list of sixty or more psalms and hymns thus learned by him was found among his manuscripts.

A friend closely identified with White Lake life, writes,

"Mr. Wilder's whole religious bearing was so sincere and truthful, that no one thought of hesitating in responding to his overt acts in the parlor, at the table, or elsewhere; and all that he did was done with so much dignity and seriousness, that every one felt constrained to yield to his wishes. He from the first commenced, and ever after continued, morning and evening prayers; also asking God's blessing upon every meal. Whenever a minister was present, he resigned to him the services. Never did a clergyman of any denomination nor a colporteur appear at the Mansion House, but he was at once treated with marked respect. Mr. Wilder always began the Sunday evening recitations, reciting some hymn with his usual precision and firmness, which seemed to mean, 'I am not afraid of the face of clay, nor ashamed of the name of

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Christ.' His urbanity was of the old school, courteous and attentive. For many years his dignified deportment, tempered by humor genuine and quiet, had a most happy influence at the Mansion House. He seemed ever to be growing in faith and devotion to his Master. On the Sabbath he always carried with him a bundle of tracts, which he felt bound to distribute at the church door. These were always kindly received, on account probably of his patriarchal appearance and the importance he seemed to put upon them." W. W. C.

In his last summer residence at White Lake, occurred an informal but happy celebration of Mr. Wilder's "golden wedding," which the few there present can never forget. In the cheerful parlor, decorated in autumn splendor by loving hearts and hands, were hung wreaths appropriately made, the one of white perennial flowers encircling the figures of fifty years ago, 1814; the other of brilliantly varied leaves, dark crimson and scarlet, not many of them "yellow and sere," around the present terminus, 1864, under which a peerless bride and venerated bridegroom were crowned anew by loving children, amid songs and congratulations, mingled also with "thanksgiving and prayer."

In the fall of the year of this golden wedding celebration, Mr. Wilder calmly took a final leave of White Lake, thus breaking another link that bound him to this earth, for it was a spot greatly endeared to him, not only by habit and by its numerous native charms, but as a place where he had enjoyed

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so much pleasant intercourse with valued Christian friends, and where emphatically, "in blessing others, he had himself been blest."

We have now but to consider Mr. Wilder as a resident of Elizabeth. In the church and neighborhood prayer-meetings he took delighted interest. His prayers on these occasions became increasingly timely and appropriate, being no mere formula of words, but often relating to the passage of Scripture or the hymn which was read immediately preceding. The remarks he would sometimes make, usually touching upon some actual experience of God's goodness to himself or others, were always listened to with marked respect. There was a sincerity and heartiness about Mr. Wilder, an evident belief on his own part of what he said, that did much to secure attention and carry conviction to the hearts of others.

Precious seasons were these when at times such aged Christians as Mr. Wilder, Dr. Kittle, Dr. Magie, and sometimes Elder Elihu Price, would meet together to tell of the love of Christ which they had found unfailing, and to pray for a blessing upon themselves and others. Words of counsel and encouragement from lips such as these, endeared by long experience, and lives, through grace, so free from guile, fell with double power upon both old and young.

At these meetings was also often present Rev. Dr. John Gosman, a highly valued friend of Mr. Wilder, who on one occasion made this succinct

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remark: "The original constitution under which our nature was placed uttered the stern injunction, *Do and live.* That constitution of grace under which *we* are placed on our receiving the Saviour *reverses* the order, and its language is, *Live and do.*"

It is pleasant to remember that Mr. Wilder never subsided into the vacuity sometimes attendant upon old age; failing strength and somewhat increasing deafness being the chief reminders to himself and others of his many years.

In 1864, Mr. Wilder met with a severe trial in the death of a dear daughter, a sister's child who had been to him as his own since her early childhood. Her very name, Sarah Stoddard, that of his "honored mother," especially endeared her to him; while her lovely character, by nature and by grace, riveted more strongly still the affection between herself and her adopted father. In 1842 she had been united in marriage to Joseph B. Sheffield, Esq., and at the time of her death resided at Saugerties upon the Hudson. In answer to a letter of advice from her dear father in 1859, she wrote:

"My dear Papa—Your truly good letter I received a few days ago. I can assure you I shall always highly appreciate it and the motives of the thoughtful, kind parent which dictated it. Truly the lines *have* fallen to me in pleasant places. Pray, dear papa, even more fervently, that none of your children may ever neglect to recognize the hand of our kind heavenly Father alike in the cher-

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ished gifts and delightful appointments of life, and in every thing that may seem adverse.

"With many who have lived much longer, I too can testify that *real* happiness consists not in the good things one may possess, however attractive to the outward eye. As I glance over life's pathway thus far trodden, prominent above all the blessings of the way looms up that mercy which in my youth brought me salvation, a free gift, purchased by the sacrifice of our blessed Redeemer. Like the beautiful mountains of our view when the sun makes them to shine in his glory, so this greatest of my blessings: it fixes my thankful gaze, and draws forth my gratitude to God for those who gave me *a Christian education.* She who two years ago went to her rest and reward, she, my dear sainted mother, laid the foundation of that education with most assiduous care and prayerfulness, and you, my second parents, faithfully built thereon. How blest a child have I been. Freely have I received; freely may I give to God my love, my life, my all.

"*One* blessing is *not yet* mine. You can well understand how I crave the precious boon, *the salvation of my dear children.* May they be led by the Holy Spirit to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

"Your affectionate and thankful daughter,

"SARAH SHEFFIELD."

Mr. Wilder was able to visit this dear daughter at her home in the fall of 1863. She died, after

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long illness, in the following February; and while he mourned the separation, it was with the hope, soon realized, of a speedy reunion with her above.

The last four years of Mr. Wilder's life were shadowed also by the dark days of the struggle for the nation's life. His loyalty was unquestioned. He wished our government to be sustained fully. He often said he "was ready, at eighty years old, himself to shoulder the musket in its defence if necessary." And if at times "direful forebodings" prevailed over brighter thoughts, were they not excusable in one so aged, overwhelmed almost by the new developments in our country's affairs? But in the darkest times he would always console himself by saying, "Well, the Lord reigns; that is sufficient."

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XXIII.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 15:55, 57.

When a man has been known as a follower of Christ, and in public and private has spoken of the love of Jesus as a sure support in every trial, able to sustain the believer even in "the eventful hour of death," it is no vain curiosity which leads one to inquire, Did he, when himself called to die, find it "even so as he had said?" Most truly can those privileged to witness the scenes attending the transfer of Mr. Wilder from earth to heaven add their testimony to the faithfulness of the Triune God in whom he had so long placed active confidence.

His health through the winter of 1864–5 had been sensibly failing, although the decline was most gradual. One effort after another had to be given up; the visit to New York, the ride, the social call, above all, the visit to the house of God. Disease of a mild type was making inroads on that wonderful frame which had so well resisted the attacks of time. Mr. Wilder himself became conscious of being feeble, and often spoke of the end as drawing near. Gently was the tabernacle being taken down;

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by no rush of tempest or storm, but by the hand of God, one pin after another was taken out of its place, until, on the morning of the twenty-third of February, suddenly, without especial warning, save by a turn of difficulty of breathing three days before, Mr. Wilder was finally, by a stroke of paralysis, quite stricken down. Rather let us say, "He seemed at once raised," so writes one of his family, "to a sphere just beyond our reach. From this state, so bound as to his bodily faculties, it was feared at first that he would not rally so as to be able to communicate again with those around him. The brain was evidently oppressed, and he seemed bewildered by the strange helplessness to which he was reduced; but, thanks be to God, his powers were soon in a measure restored; his mouth unstopped; and from that time onward for several days he was able to speak many touching and most appropriate words of parting, mingled with blessing and almost triumphant notes of praise."

Who that for days saw that venerable figure, surmounted by a countenance and head so noble, as it was "strengthened up" by pillows, could fail to be reminded of a similar scene of long ago, the dying couch of the patriarch Jacob? especially as one member of his family after another was brought to him for a parting blessing, while messages of advice and love were left by him for absent relatives and friends. Nor did the similarity cease when, this work being done, he could bear up no longer, but "gathered up his feet into the bed,"

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like a tired child quietly breathing away his life as on his Saviour's breast.

Had Mr. Wilder never emerged from the state of apparently semi-consciousness into which the paralysis had brought him, no one could doubt of his acceptance with God through the merits of his Redeemer. But the Lord kindly answered the prayer he had so often offered for himself and others, that their "death may exhibit the triumphs of divine grace." No close could have been more fitting than was his to the whole current of his life. He was himself to the last.

Listen to a few of his many utterances by which, when once his tongue was loosed, he was enabled to glorify God, doing good unto the end.

"I trust in Jesus. Blessed Jesus! Oh, I love him."

"My blessing to all of you; but the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ is more than all."

To his son-in-law, "All is well. I am well in Christ Jesus."

"Blessed Jesus, cleanse me from sin. The blood of Jesus cleanses from sin. Blessed consideration. It is all my hope, Lord Jesus. It is cheering."

He repeated the twenty-third Psalm alternately with his new pastor, Rev. Mr. Roberts, and then said to him, "When you preach to the great congregation, remember the Lord Jesus, the doctrine of redemption, the name of Jesus, whereby we can be saved. Is not that precious?"

"To meet those in heaven whom we know, Oh it will be delightful."

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These expressions did not immediately follow one another. Mr. Wilder was often quiet for a time, and would then break out anew, repeating perhaps some favorite hymn, sometimes at length, and with no hesitation or mistake. Among these were the following:

"I'll praise my Maker with my breath."

"Jesus, I love thy charming name."

"Jesus can make a dying bed."

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise."

Hymns were also sung to him by trembling hearts and voices, in which he attempted to join, seeming to wish to aid the song with his own rejoicing spirit.

Again, Mr. Wilder would say, "It would be dark if the Lord Jesus had not died for sinners."

For an absent granddaughter and her husband he left the message:

"'So may they live as truly one;
And when their work on earth is done,
Rise hand in hand to heaven, and share
The joys of love for ever there.'

"May they meet me in heaven."

When asked by his physician, "How do you feel, Mr. Wilder?" his answer was, "Great peace."

Mr. Wilder would also repeat the Lord's prayer and the hymns above mentioned, sometimes ejaculating,

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"My Jesus and my trust."

"Help me, my Lord Jesus."

"Yes, thou art precious to my soul."

"How delightful to go to heaven; to be for ever in heaven: how delightful; how delightful!"

Again, he left messages to Mr. John Tappan, Mr. Guy Richards, Mr. David Hoadley, and other friends.

Among Mr. Wilder's last sayings were,

"Oh for rest evermore. All is well, all is peace. Happy, happy! Amen."

"Glory, honor, praises everlasting. Praise the Lord. O praise him; praise the Lord. Praise him in everlasting strains! Farewell."

Life lingered on until just after midnight on Friday morning, March 3, 1865, when, to use Mr. Wilder's own frequent expression, his "soul, emancipated from its frail tabernacle, was permitted to soar away and be for ever at rest."

He died as he would have wished, in the bosom of his family, constantly attended, among other friends, by six or seven grandsons, the loving, efficient kindness of some of whom not quite his own, can never be forgotten.

The funeral services, held on Monday, March 6th, in the Second Presbyterian church, of which Mr. Wilder was a member, were conducted by Rev. Mr. Roberts, Rev. Dr. Chickering of Boston, Rev. Dr. Hutton of New York, and Rev. Messrs. H. Read, S. A. Clark, R. Aikman, and Alfred Chester, and largely attended. Friends gathered from far and

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near. Every mark of affectionate respect was paid.

Mr. Wilder's mortal remains await the resurrection in the beautiful "Evergreen Cemetery," in the northern suburbs of Elizabeth; and near them now repose those of his friend and pastor, Dr. Magie.

A few years ago, in writing to a friend on the death of a daughter, Mr. Wilder uttered words he might even now speak, were messages permitted from the world above:

"The grave over which your tears fall holds but the broken casket of the jewel, which now shines with heavenly radiance amid the angels of God, amid the myriads of the redeemed who encircle his throne, in the presence of Christ, for ever.

"May Christ alone be your rod and staff, and you be clothed in his perfect righteousness while completing the days of your earthly pilgrimage, until called to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, to be reünited to the loved and now departed of earth. Then no shadow shall darken our souls or obscure our vision; farewells shall be sounds unknown; all tears shall be wiped away: our glorified spirits will be free from all tendencies and inducements to that which is evil.

"Oh glorious hour, Oh blest abode;
We shall be near and like our God,
And flesh and sense no more control
The sacred pleasures of the soul."

He still speaks in the words written not long before his death:

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"My dear children, allow me to say that 'my heart's desire and prayer to God is,' that all your domestic relations and comforts may be sweetened by a participation of God's grace; that all your prospects may reach forward to another and brighter world; that all your hopes may extend beyond the grave; that you may be guarded against the scepticisms, evils, and dangers of this ensnaring world; that above all and over all your reliance for salvation may be founded alone, by a true and living faith, in the blood and righteousness and atoning sacrifice of an almighty crucified Redeemer, doing works meet for repentance, manifesting your faith by a holy life and conversation, and adhering to the great and essential truths of the gospel at all times and under all circumstances.

"In short, may your lives be that of devotion to God, your death exhibit the triumphs of faith in Christ Jesus, and your eternity be spent with the just made perfect, amid the effulgent glories of heaven, in for ever celebrating the praises of redeeming love.

"Please say to my dear grandchildren, that their old grandpère entreats of them to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, being impressed with the conviction that, by his grace, all other things which are essential to their present and eternal welfare shall be added thereunto.

"I will say, in conclusion, that I have seen all that this world calls great and glorious. I have seen human nature in its most attractive features

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and in its lowest degradation. I know what it is to tread the courts of emperors, kings, and princes. I know what it is to tread the courts of a prison as well as of a palace. I know what it is 'to abound,' and what it is 'to be abased,' and *I have come, with the aid of divine grace, to this solemn, impressive conviction, that there is but one thing in this transitory world worth knowing, worth seeking, worth living for, or worth dying for, and that is, to know aright Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and to rely only and solely on his blood and righteousness for salvation.*

"That this may be the happy portion of us all, is the prayer of your friend,

"S. V. S. WILDER."

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APPENDIX.

SEVENTY-SEVEN MAXIMS,

ADDRESSED BY

S. V. S. WILDER TO HIS GRANDSONS.

WHITE LAKE, N. Y., May 20, 1857.

MY DEAR GRANDSONS—Having this day, through the goodness and mercy of a benign Providence, attained the age of *seventy-seven* years; and being admonished that, according to the common course of nature, my earthly career must soon terminate, while yours has only as it were commenced, and you must soon enter upon the busy concerns of life; I submit for your consideration and adoption the following rules and maxims, the truth and practical knowledge of which I have acquired from the sacred Bible, and by dear-bought experience; and which I hope each of you may be enabled by divine grace to adhere to and be governed by during your pilgrimage in this changing world.

1. Know then, that if you obey the command, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," all things that are essential to your present good shall be added unto you; and that by a true and living faith, exemplified by a holy life and conversation, in the blood and righteousness and atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," you can eventually secure an "inheritance" which is "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens."

2. Aim to "do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk

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humbly with thy God," and "acknowledge him in all thy ways."

3. In all your enterprises let wisdom and prudence lay the foundation; and energy, combined with perseverance in the execution, will, with the divine blessing, produce beneficial results.

4. In all your earthly undertakings never have recourse to nor rely on the patronage of the great, the powerful, or the wealthy; but rely on your own resources judiciously arranged, and on your untiring efforts vigorously made, and unremittingly continued; looking to God for his blessing thereon.

5. Instead of attempting to lead Providence, be always ready to be led by Providence; and never feel vexed or disappointed at any untoward event, wherein you have not to accuse yourself of neglect of duty.

6. Never undertake to build without first counting the cost, and having the ready means to complete. He that borrows to build, builds to sell. Whatever you buy or sell, let or hire, make a clean bargain and never trust to "We sha'n't disagree about trifles."

7. Never contract a debt without having the ability, or a fair prospect of liquidating it at maturity; and honorably fulfil all your pecuniary engagements.

8. Never attempt to overreach or take advantage of the necessities of the needy, or avail yourself of the ignorance of the uninformed to advance your own interests; but do to others as you would have them do to you.

9. Let integrity, fidelity, and punctuality characterize all your dealings with your fellow-men; never grind the face of the poor, nor do an act of injustice to the widow or the fatherless.

10. Never purchase that which you do not want, and never want that which you have not the spare money to pay for. Owe no man any thing save love and good-will. Never put off until to-morrow that which you can accomplish to-day.

11. *Never swerve from the truth*, even to save your neck from the gallows.

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12. Among all the *ships* on board of which you may embark, be the most cautious in selecting, and the most particular in forming a *copartnership*.

13. Be familiar with none, intimate with few, confiding to one, but courteous, candid, and condescending to all.

14. Think twice before you speak once, and tell not all you think, nor taste all you desire, nor say all that you know, nor give credence to all you hear.

15. If you cannot speak well of another, be silent. Never speak evil, however much one may have injured you.

16. Never avenge a wrong done to yourself; but pray that the transgressor may repent, and be forgiven by your Father in heaven.

17. If you wish to profit by your intercourse with older men, be the listener rather than the leader in conversation.

18. Regard your word as sacred and as binding as your bond. Be careful how or what you promise, but fulfil promises with nice exactness.

19. Beware of epicurean propensities, and bear in mind that food which pampers the palate and the stomach is seldom nutricious or salutary.

20. Let total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors be written on the tablet of your heart; and remember that while the inebriate drinks rum, rum drinks him, God disregards him, angels despise him, men deride him, and the devil destroys him.

21. Respect yourself if you wish others to respect you. Strive to gain your own approbation, and you will eventually have the approbation of all those whose good opinion is worth possessing.

22. Keep from your minds all indelicate ideas. As you are the natural protectors, be also the stern advocates and defenders, not the destroyers of virtue and innocence.

23. Do nothing that will not, with a clear conscience, bear a retrospective, self-approving view. We are happy just in proportion as we are virtuous, and keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.

24. To secure the good opinion of others, avoid arrogance

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and ostentation: entertain a humble opinion of yourselves, and remember,

> "That best of characters will always please,
> Which joins good sense with innocence and ease."

25. An act by which you make one friend and one enemy is a losing game: revenge is a much stronger principle than gratitude.

26. Bear in mind, while basking in the sunshine of prosperity, that you cannot prove who are your foul-weather friends, until the storms of adversity shall detach and scatter your fair-weather acquaintances. The man who fawns upon you in prosperity will surely trample on you in adversity.

27. Our pretended friends flatter us, our real friends tell us the truth; but it is in vain to look among men for more than man.

28. Under a bland and smiling face is often concealed the unrelenting poison of revenge, envy, deceit, duplicity, detraction, and hypocrisy.

29. Troubles are like hornets, the less ado you make about them the better; your outcry will only bring out the whole swarm.

30. In the day of your embarrassment or adversity, never apply for aid or relief to one who is conscious that in justice and equity he owes you a debt, and from whom you have no legal document to prove it; neither apply to one whom, in the days of your prosperity, you have laid under obligation, by having rendered him repeated and essential services. In the hour of need and distress rather apply to a stranger, or to one from whom you have already been the recipient of favors.

31. Adversity does not take from us our true friends; it only disperses those who pretended to be so.

32. Never strike hands, or in other words, *never lend your signature on any consideration, nor under any circumstances—not even to your grandfather;* but if you are free from debt, and have money on hand, give it freely to alleviate the sorrows of the distressed; or lend it to oblige a friend, taking

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ample security therefor; or rather, in preference, give it at once out and out.

I once had money and a friend;
I lent my money to that friend;
I lost my money and my friend.

If you are satisfied to profit by this theoretic testimony without having recourse to a practical knowledge of the foregoing facts, it may be worth to you collectively what it has cost me to ascertain the sad reality by experience.

33. Poverty has the advantage of being disencumbered of sycophants, who cluster around the rich and powerful, watching for an opportunity, like the vulture and hyena, to satiate themselves by feeding on the fat carcass.

34. Remember, we are what we are by the grace of God, and that "every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

35. Never be too much elated in prosperity, nor too much dejected in adversity. Learn to "know thyself," as the best means to acquire a knowledge of others.

36. He that attempts to sit on two stools is in danger of being let down between them; and he that sits upon the fence is often puzzled to know which side to descend.

37. Disdain a base and despicable action in yourself, more than you would despise the wretch who commits it.

38. Emergency, that evokes latent energy, contributes, more frequently than natural talents, academic acquirements, or classical taste, to make a man what he is. The more business a man has the more he is able to accomplish, for he learns to economize time.

39. Those who are placed in humble circumstances, and occupy a subordinate station, know not what character they would assume, or by what motives they would be actuated, nor by what principles they would be governed, if exalted to wealth and power.

40. Treat every man as if you believed him to be honest; but deal with him cautiously until he proves himself to be entitled to your confidence.

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41. We seldom find people ungrateful, so long as we are in a condition to serve them.

42. Every one looking *downwards*, becomes impressed with his own greatness; but looking *upwards*, feels his own littleness and nothingness.

43. Three questions to be put to ourselves before speaking evil of any man or woman: first, Is it true? second, Is it kind? third, Is it necessary?

44. Utter no word that will wound the feelings of those who are in humble circumstances, and never speak of natural defects in the company of the deformed. He who speaks upon those subjects which he is aware will tend to make another uneasy in company, is ill-bred; and he who puts a bad construction on a good act reveals his own wickedness at heart.

45. A miser gets rich by seeming poor; an extravagant man gets poor by seeming rich; but a punctual man is rarely a poor man, and never a man of doubtful credit.

46. A well-regulated life will never know a vacuum sufficient to require a large share of amusement to be sought abroad to fill it. The true secret of happiness is to learn to delight in the performance of duty.

47. Our fortune depends on external causes; but our happiness, with the blessing of God, on ourselves and intimate associates.

48. All people find fault with their memory, few with their judgment; but he who thinks too much of himself, is liable to be forgotten by the rest of the world.

49. True religion will show its influence in every part of our conduct; it is like the sap of a living tree, which penetrates the most distant boughs.

50. We are strong when our conduct has been regulated by the golden rules of truth and honesty.

51. Reason deliberates before it judges, but anger passes sentence without deliberation. When pride leads the van, beggary brings up the rear.

52. Uniformity of temper is an important trait of character. A man ought to let circumspection characterize all his actions.

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53. No one ever did, or ever will, or ever can love or esteem an arrogant, self-conceited, dissolute fretter, fault-finder, and habitual scolder: he employs his first years to make his last miserable.

54. Speak with calmness and deliberation on all occasions, especially in circumstances which tend to irritate.

55. A false friend and a shadow attend us only when the sun shines; and money, or the expectation of it by inheritance, has ruined more men than the want of it ever did.

56. The success of individuals in life is greatly owing to their learning early to depend on their own resources: let your discourse with others be short on matters of business.

57. Few men repent of having kept silence; but many that they have not done so.

58. God looks down upon them with an eye of favor, who look up to him with an eye of faith.

59. The highest offices are like tops of high rocks, seldom reached except by eagles and reptiles. Beware of the dangers of public life; they have ruined many.

60. Nothing is humbler than ambition, when it is about to climb. The true way of enriching ourselves is by cutting off our wants. The master's eye will do more work than both his hands.

61. True wisdom consists no less in ability to give good counsel, than in a disposition to receive and practise it when given. If your means suit not your ends, pursue those ends which suit your means.

62. There never was a hypocrite so disguised, but he had some mark or other to be known by; and a friend, like a mirror, will best discover to you your own defects; but he is the best scholar who has learned to have the fewest.

63. It is wisdom to bear silently with evils we cannot remedy, but folly to clamor against them. Let a man do his best, and the world may do its worst. Misfortunes are not to be fled from or avoided, but overcome.

64. Breaking your faith may gain you riches, but never will get you honor. Do injury to no one; for by so doing,

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you but teach others to injure you. Never carry a sword in your tongue to injure the reputation of any man.

65. He who keeps not his promises, will never keep a friend. Pleasure may lean on illusion, but happiness must repose on truth. Religion should be the garment worn next to the heart: too many only make a cloak of it.

66. Men often mistake the love of their own opinion for the love of truth.

67. Every thing that tends to emancipate us from exter nal restraint, without adding to our own power of self-government, is mischievous.

68. Men dote on this world as if it was never to have an end, and neglect preparing for the next as if it were never to have a beginning.

69. Blessed be any power which brings the immortal soul to the foot of the cross, conscious of its ignorance, its errors, and its sins.

70. Never condemn your neighbor unheard, however many the accusations which may be preferred against him; every story has two ways of being told. There are no faults truly fatal but those we neither acknowledge nor repair.

71. As a wise and obedient child maketh a happy father, so a wise father maketh a happy child. As among wise men he is the wisest who thinks he knows the least; so among fools he is the greatest who thinks he knows the most.

72. Wherever you go, or whatever you do, endeavor to carry with you a sense of God's presence, his holiness, and his love: it will preserve you from a thousand snares.

73. In your benefactious regulate your donations according to your ability and the importance of the object; not by what others have subscribed. Let your personal and family expenses be small, and your donations to religious and benevolent objects as large as is compatible with your income.

74. Consider the prompt and cheerful payment of your ministerial and pew tax as among your first duties.

75. Esteem it a peculiar privilege to become well-qualified Sabbath-school teachers; but in assuming that delightful employment, bear in mind the responsibility of your station,

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and reflect that on the able and faithful discharge of your duty may depend, by the grace of God, the salvation of immortal souls.

76. Honor and obey your parents, and vie with each other in contributing, by your assiduity, filial respect, and dutiful behavior, to render their declining years serene and happy; and as you are the natural guardians of your more delicate and confiding sisters, be their stern advocates and protectors, and let courtesy, brotherly kindness, and affability characterize all your relations and social intercourse with them.

77. Let the Bible be your text-book for every thing relating to the life that now is, as well as that which is to come.

> "Let not the morrow your vain thoughts employ,
> But think this day the last you will enjoy."

And may this solemn consideration influence and regulate all your deliberations, sayings, decisions, and actions, both for time and for eternity.

Thus, my dear grandsons, you have in theory as many rules and maxims as I am years of age, by which to establish, regulate, and guide your future course; and I enjoin on each of you, as you mature in years, to take a copy of this document and peruse it at least once a year. And now, commending each of you to the God of all grace, my heart's desire and prayer to Him is, that you may find grace to profit by the foregoing rules and maxims; that all your hopes may extend beyond the grave, and reach forward to another and brighter world; that your lives may be lives of devotion to God, your death exhibit the triumphs of faith in Jesus, and your eternity be spent in celebrating the praises of redeeming love. With these views, prayers, and aspirations, I remain your affectionate grandfather,

S. V. S. WILDER, aged 77.

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THE DEATH OF WASHINGTON.

CHARLESTOWN, Jan. 1, 1800.

DEAR MOTHER*—Among the various occurrences in the commencement of the new-born year, there is no event so distressing as the death of our beloved and illustrious chief, GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON, who departed this life Dec. 14, 1799.

Peace to his soul! the fatal hour is past,
And silence o'er him has her mantle cast;
His deeds, his virtues are enrolled by fame;
Nor shall oblivion ever shroud his name.
Then let fraternal love attune the lyre,
And snatch a ray of Genius' sacred fire,
While the sad strain, in soft and solemn lays,
Dwells on his merit, and records his praise.
Let the full chord to yon blue arch arise,
Our Washington's translated to the skies.

In consequence of the afflicting intelligence, divine services were performed in this town on Tuesday, 31st Dec., 1799. The town never exhibited a more solemn and interesting appearance. Notice having been given to the inhabitants of the neighboring towns, the concourse of people was almost innumerable; the stores and shops were shut at one P. M., and all business suspended. The bell was muffled, and tolled at intervals from nine in the morning until the service commenced. The meeting-house was greatly crowded, and still a large proportion of the people could not get within the doors.

The services were solemn, appropriate, and impressive. A very eloquent and pathetic sermon was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Morse to a most attentive, devout, and mourning

* The ancestry of Sarah Stoddard, Mr. Wilder's mother, is traced to the knight William Stoddard, from Normandy, cousin of William the Conqueror, and who entered England with him A. D. 1066. His descendant Anthony Stoddard emigrated from London and settled in Boston in 1639, among whose descendants were Rev. Solomon Stoddard of Northampton, President Edwards, Major-general W. T. Sherman, and Rev. David Tappan Stoddard, missionary to the Nestorians.

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audience. The music was solemn and sublime, and the whole scene exhibited in the strongest of all possible colors the deep affliction of the people at a loss utterly irreparable. The floods of tears—for 't was angelic to weep over the tomb of virtue—and the badges of mourning which were universally worn, the church and hall hung in black, and a procession of many hundred persons, composed of men of all classes, and the solemn grief pictured on every countenance made an impression which many years will not efface.

I presume the sentiments and feelings which inspired the persons present pervade the country throughout. However divided into parties on political subjects, with respect to the character of this great man I trust there is but one opinion in the United States. As he lived beloved and admired, he has died truly lamented, and his memory will be honored as long as wisdom, virtue, and piety shall be esteemed among men.

Vain is the wish and fruitless the attempt to do justice to the merits of the illustrious Washington. He was as a hero, invincible; as a general, unrivalled; as a writer, incomparable; as a statesman, unequalled; and as a man, inimitable. He may with justice be pronounced the most unexceptionable, the most finished, the most godlike human character that ever acted a part on the theatre of the world.

While matchless virtue shall be revered; while transcendent talents shall command respect; while the most brilliant and beneficial achievements in war, and labors no less arduous and important in peace, shall deserve applause; and while the love of liberty remains inherent in the human heart, the name of Washington shall stand enrolled among the greatest benefactors of mankind; his memory shall be cherished by every grateful succeeding generation, and the amaranthine garland of fame which lately adorned his brow shall blossom and flourish with increasing fragrance, vigor, and beauty, till time and nature shall be no more. The tearful eye and throbbing breast of every American discovers the general misfortune of our country. America mourns the most illustrious character that ever graced humanity. The

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love of Washington is interwoven with the ligaments of each heart, and with our lives alone can we resign his image.

How happy he who sinks to rest
By all regretted, loved, and blest.
For him the afflicted melts in woe;
For him the widow's tears shall flow;
For him the orphan's prayer shall rise,
And waft his spirit to the skies.
To deck his grave shall virtue bring
The earliest tribute of the spring;
And friendship, weeping, shall repair
To plant her mournful cypress there;
While in our hearts we 'll raise a tomb,
'Round which immortal wreaths shall bloom.

And may we all consider that we must shortly follow our deceased benefactor; and may his unequalled example and equanimity be inculcated and practised by his successors, and his inestimable virtues be transmitted to posterity. That we may all at last participate with him in the realms of eternal felicity is the sincere wish of your son,

S. V. S. WILDER.

FROM A LETTER TO ONE OF HIS SISTERS, 1801.

Remember that as nothing in this life is to be secured without labor, so the weighty and invaluable treasures of erudition are only to be acquired by exertions vigorously made and unremittingly continued.

CLOSE OF AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO DR. MORSE ABOUT 1802.

What a multitude of great men—[speaking of the Roman empire]—of every kind does it not present to our view; what powerful, what glorious kings; what great captains; what famous conquerors; what wise magistrates; what learned philosophers, and what admirable legislators, who are all now, alas, sunk into oblivion.

Such and so withering are our earthly joys,
Which time or sickness speedily destroys.

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While all things are in motion and fluctuate upon earth; while states and empires pass away with incredible rapidity, and the human race, vainly employed in the external view of these things, are also drawn in by the same torrent, imperceptibly there passes in secret an order and disposition of things, unknown and invisible, which, however, determines our destiny to all eternity.

The power of Jesus Christ, the founder of this empire, is without bounds, measure, or end. Nothing is done without his order or permission; every thing is disposed by his wisdom and power; every thing coöperates, directly or indirectly, for the accomplishment of his designs; and God grant that we may all have our share in that blessed kingdom, whose law is truth, whose King is love, and whose duration is eternity.

DEALING WITH A PASSING VAGARY.

Mr. Wilder was once invited to take dinner in Paris with some well-meaning people who claimed peculiar sanctity in imitating the habits of the primitive Christians. The dinner was not an extravagant one, but by no means simple. Two kinds of soup, two of meat, two of wine, two of vegetables, followed by dessert and coffee. Mr. Wilder partook of but one dish, and took no wine, coffee, or dessert, at which much surprise was expressed. When offered any thing, he said if they could prove that the first Christians ate it, he would also partake; otherwise he could not consent; and if they could prove that the first Christians ate so much as to oblige them to take coffee as a digester, he would do the same. The community of goods, he said, should also be strictly adhered to; but this they did not practise. Mr. Wilder emptied his pockets of all the money he had about him, but no one else did the same. He was not again invited.

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STORY OF REV. FREDERIC LEO.

Mr. Wilder used to give some interesting details of the private history of Mr. Leo, Secretary of the Paris Bible Society, in their simple truth rivalling the tales of mere romance.

In early life, Mr. Leo and a young lady, the daughter of a German baron near Frankfort, became mutually attached; but her father objected to the match, not considering him sufficiently his daughter's equal in birth. She would marry no other, nor would he.

Years rolled away. The baron died, leaving all his property to this his only child, with the proviso that she was not to marry Frederic Leo.

She continued both faithful and obedient, allowing her lover, after her father's death, no greater privilege than before, that of seeing her at her window once a year for a short hour, he coming from Paris annually for that express purpose.

Years still rolled on. Often would Mr. Leo descant to Mr. and Mrs. Wilder of the charms of his beloved; and hearing one day that they were about to visit that part of Germany, he obtained their promise to call upon and see his friend.

Arrived at Frankfort, they took an early opportunity to do so. It was at a pretty residence, not far out of the city. They asked for the lady, sending up of course a card showing by whom they were introduced to her. She was so much overcome at the idea of seeing any one who had come from her Mr. Leo, as to be unable to see them for three hours. They waited patiently, anxious to see the lovely lady so often described to them.

At length slow steps were heard, and what could it be? Yes, unmistakably the dull thump of a crutch coming down the stairway. An old lady enters—old, actually infirm. It was she—the dream of Leo's heart; and as it seems, in his eyes still young and beautiful. Oh happy blindness of true love! And her heart *was* still warm and fresh as when, long ago, she and her lover had first exchanged their vows of constancy.

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Not long after Mr. and Mrs. Wilder's visit, the lady died, leaving all her fortune to Mr. Leo; who still, however, retained his place as Secretary of the Bible Society.

The above story has perhaps too prosaic a termination. Mr. Leo met in Paris another young lady, a recent convert from Romanism, who he declared was the perfect image of his lost love. This young lady he married; and thus ends the history.

NARRATIVE OF REV. LEWIS WAY.

The story of the manner in which the Rev. Lewis Way, an English gentleman of great wealth, received his property, is strange, and was often told by Mr. Wilder. Rev. Dr. King, who spent several days with Mr. Way on mount Lebanon in 1823, and heard the story from his own mouth, gives it as follows:

A wealthy gentleman by the name of John Way, but no relation of the Mr. Way above-mentioned, having no children, was looking about to find some one of his name whom he might make his heir.

One day walking in the streets of London, he observed his own name over the door of a shoemaker's shop, and so went in, and said, "I perceive your name is Way. That is my name;" and after a little conversation, he asked the shoemaker if he would not like to go and take a little ale or porter with him. The shoemaker accepted the invitation, and they went together to a place near by where the proposed beverage was sold. A bottle of it was called for and brought, but there was no corkscrew with which to open it. "Oh," said the shoemaker, "I have one in my pocket." The gentleman, hearing this, said within himself, "If I make this man my heir, a man who carries a corkscrew in his pocket, he will soon spend what I give him;" and he determined to seek some other man bearing his name, to whom he might bequeath his property.

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Sometime after, he saw the name of Lewis Way, who was then a young lawyer, and in very moderate circumstances, made his acquaintance, and invited him to dine with him; and finally proposed to him to marry a certain young lady of his acquaintance. The young lawyer refused, saying that he did not fancy her, and could not gratify his friend by forming such a connection.

Seeing that the young lawyer had a mind of his own, and possessed very respectable talents, he determined to make him his heir; and after a while he sent him documents in which he made over to him one hundred thousand pounds sterling, stating that at his death he might expect as much more, that is, another one hundred thousand pounds. On receiving these documents, to him so unexpected, he said he almost lost his mind, and shut himself up for about a week, feeling that he did not know what to do with such an immense sum of money. But reflecting on this strange event, he concluded that it was of God, and determined to use it for his glory.

He afterwards studied divinity, and became known as the Rev. Lewis Way, took an interest in the Jews, paid a debt of the London Jews' Society of sixteen thousand pounds sterling, and went out as a missionary of that society to Syria, with the full expectation of visiting the Holy City, Jerusalem. Illness, however, prevented the accomplishment of what he had earnestly desired. He took up his residence for a little time on mount Lebanon, and then returned to Europe.

PREACHING IN LANCASTER GRAVEYARD.

The events here narrated were regarded as so striking an illustration of divine providence, that Mr. Wilder, a few years ago, dictated a narrative of them.

A Baptist clergyman, being moved with deep interest in the spiritual welfare of the precious immortal souls of the people of Lancaster, came to that town, and after visiting

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several families of his own persuasion, and not finding one who dared to open their dwelling for a prayer-meeting, resolved that he would go to the graveyard, with a view to preach "the truth as it is in Jesus" to any one who desired to be edified thereby. He accordingly gave notice that he should hold a meeting at the graveyard on the "Old Common" on the following Tuesday at three o'clock P. M.

On that day and hour some dozen or more assembled for the pious purpose of really being profited by the services of this well-intentioned preacher; but there came upwards of a hundred others whose intentions were to disturb the meeting. Among these unprincipled persons was a man of some prominence in the town, who sat on horseback in the road, and cried out to the preacher in the midst of the sermon, asking when he "made his escape from state's prison." During the exercises, another man of considerable property and some influence, Mr. S——, cried out to the preacher when engaged in prayer, and standing, it seems, beside the grave of this man's first wife and leaning his hand on her head-stone, "Don't make such a noise, or you 'll wake up my wife." In the singing of a hymn which followed, this same man exclaimed, "We want some grog to wet our whistles;" and suiting the action to the word, he left the graveyard for the tavern near by, and brought two pailsful of strong toddy, with several small mugs, and passed them gratuitously round among the crowd, who soon became so uproarious that the minister was led to express to them the impropriety of such conduct, and to adjourn the meeting until the following Tuesday at the same place, and precisely at the same hour as before, three o'clock P. M.

During these occurrences I was absent in New York; but on my return on Saturday, this preacher called on me, and with a good deal of emotion stated to me the foregoing facts. He added that he had understood from several quarters that they were preparing rotten eggs and other offensive missiles with which to pelt him at the contemplated meeting. He said he had called the day before on the clergyman of the place, and stated to him that, feeling compassion for the deplorable con-

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dition of the dear people of his charge, he had come in the cheering hope of doing something for their spiritual benefit, and now requested him, as their minister, to give him a line which might tend to soften any asperity of feeling or action that might manifest itself at the proposed meeting; but the clergyman, on hearing this, arose, and taking him by the collar, led him to the door, and pushed him out of the house. "Now, sir," said he to me, "I have come to you as a Christian magistrate," being justice of the peace, "to know if I can count on you for protection on Tuesday next?"

I replied that I much regretted he had chosen such an inappropriate spot for his intended religious exercises, but seeing that he had made the appointment, he might count on me to be there.

The man at whose grave the preacher stood had married a second wife from a neighboring town; but such had been his intemperate habits, and his ill-treatment of her and of his children by his first wife, that neither wife nor children had been able for weeks to reside in the same house with him, which was one of the most commodious in the place. The wife had returned to her parents.

On the following Monday, what was my surprise on seeing a man drive up at full speed to my dwelling, exclaiming, "S—— has just hung himself! You, sir, and five other citizens are requested to come down and hold an inquest." This appalling service it was my melancholy duty to perform. The funeral was fixed for the next day at one o'clock; but in consequence of delay in the coming of his wife and children, what was my astonishment, on reaching the graveyard at three o'clock as I had promised, in order to protect the preacher, to see the funeral procession, with Dr. —— at its head, just entering; and what was my wonder on beholding the body of the wretched suicide lowered into the silent grave on the very spot where the minister stood the week before by the grave of his former wife, when this blasphemous man cried out, "Don't make such a noise, or you'll wake up my wife." The clock was heard striking the very hour fixed for the contemplated meeting, three o'clock, which

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meeting of course did not take place, and the good minister returned home the same day. God had spoken more loudly than man could do.

THE HATTERS' SUNDAY VISIT AT THE BOLTON MANSION.

Neighboring families had been requested to attend the Sabbath evening worship in the library of Mr. Wilder's mansion: the Spirit of God was there; and so many assembled from Sabbath to Sabbath, that deadly opposition was awakened among the enemies of evangelical truth. Not far distant was a large hat manufacturing establishment, and on one Sabbath evening several of the bold, hardy men resolved to present themselves and break up the meeting.

As the usual attendants were assembled, and Mr. Wilder was about to begin worship, five rough-looking men entered and stood in a row near the door. "Mrs. Wilder, please set some chairs for those gentlemen," said Mr. Wilder courteously. "No, we had rather stand," replied one of them; but the chairs were brought and set beside them.

Opening the services, Mr. Wilder said, "When I look around me, and behold so many immortal beings here met for the worship of the living and true God, on whom we depend for life and all that is dear to us for time and eternity; and when I reflect that probably in less than fifty short years our bodies will all be five feet under ground, and our souls gone up to give their everlasting account, I feel oppressed with the responsibility devolving upon me; and much do I wish there was some faithful minister of Christ here to lead in these delightful services. I beg you, my friends, to pray that the Holy Spirit may be present with us, and that every soul here may be savingly blessed."

At this the five visitors took their seats, and the services went on. A sweet solemnity and the stillness of death pervaded the little meeting. Mr. Wilder's heart was deeply stirred, and as he was expounding a passage of Scripture and

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uttering appropriate appeals to all present, he saw the cuff of the sleeve wiping tears from the hard faces of the strangers. The happy meeting was continued to its close, when the five men lingered, and one of them spoke to Mr. Wilder: "We did not understand this meeting at all. We had a mind to break it up. But if this is what you do here, we like it, and we want to come again next Sunday evening if there is no objection." "Certainly there is no objection, my dear friends," said Mr. Wilder; "we shall all be glad to see you." "Then we will come," was the reply; and come they did, and there several from the hatters' establishment hopefully found Christ.

A MECHANIC IN WARE VILLAGE

Two incidents which occurred at Ware Factory Village are given in Mr. Wilder's own words.

As a demonstration of the little reliance that is to be placed on apparently death-bed declarations, I will allude to the circumstances of a Mr. C——, who was a house-painter employing a number of hands, and who, on being invited several times by me to attend the evening prayer-meetings, which took place almost every evening during the revival, admitted that religion was a good thing, that he highly approved of these meetings, and of the distribution of tracts and personal visits from house to house, but that when it came evening, he was really so wearied with the day's labor, that he felt more disposed to retire to rest than to unite with the people of God in these desirable exercises. Thus he went on from week to week following his vocation.

One day as I was sitting in my office, one of his men rushed in, exclaiming that Mr. C—— was dying, and that both he and his wife wanted me to come up immediately to his house. On reaching the door, his young wife exclaimed in agony that her husband was dying, was dying, was dying. Entering the room, I saw the suffering man stretched on the bed and writhing in intense agony.

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"Who would ever have thought I should come to this?" said he; "and I have sent for you, sir, to pray for me and with me." "Have you any special favor to ask?" I inquired. "Yes indeed, sir, that it may please God to spare my life and restore me to health again, that I may have one opportunity more of attending those dear prayer-meetings, and of consecrating more of my time and talents to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ." The feeble prayers that were offered on that solemn occasion were answered, and the supplicant in a short time was restored to usual health.

I fondly hoped from evening to evening to see Mr. C—— among the devoted ones who were generally present at our meetings; but that satisfaction was not mine. On meeting him one day, I said I was happy to see him well enough to be out days pursuing his vocation; "but I suppose," said I, "you do not venture out evenings, as I have not enjoyed the delightful privilege of seeing you fulfilling your aspirations so fervently expressed a few weeks ago, when to all human view you were about closing this earthly scene, and you considered yourself as standing on the borders of the grave." Said he, "Sir, I tell you what it is, if you were obliged to stand on the rounds of the ladder all day long as I do, you would feel more disposition to retire to rest than to attend prayer-meetings." I could not but admonish him of the danger of his position.

A few weeks after, he had a second similar attack while I was absent; but our devoted pastor attended him, whose prayers for his recovery were again heard and answered, with the same pledges and promises as before; but alas, the same apathy and non-performance of Christian duties was the result.

In a few months he removed to a neighboring town, where, I understood, a third and last attack occurred, and he was launched, with but a few moments' warning, into the unfathomed ocean of eternity.

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STORY OF A YOUNG LADY IN WARE VILLAGE.

Towards the close of the revival, the village of Ware was divided into districts, and a deacon and a layman, sometimes accompanied by the untiring pastor, were appointed to visit every house, with a view to ascertain the spiritual state of each individual. Two years after, when I had returned with my family to our former residence at Bolton, I was passing through Ware village, when, on alighting from my carriage at the hotel, I was accosted by a little girl, whose mother, she said, had heard of my expected passage through the village, and was desirous of seeing me at her house. There I was met by the mother, exclaiming, "You have come to a very sorrowful, and at the same time a very joyful house. My dear daughter A. P—— is very feeble; but her life has been wonderfully prolonged, in the good providence of God, until this hour. She has for weeks past expressed a great desire to see you before she exchanges this world for another."

On entering the room, her pale, delicate face lighted up with a smile as she said she had long desired to see me, in order to convey to me a message of the last importance in her estimation.

"You may or may not recollect, sir, that during the glorious revival in our village, my father's house was located in the district assigned to you and one of the deacons for visitation. You may or may not recollect that you were also accompanied on your first visit by Rev. Mark Tucker; that you were so coldly received by our family as not even to be asked to sit down; and that I, a rosy-cheeked girl at the time, attempted to make my escape up-stairs, when your eye caught me, and stepping forward, you handed me half a dozen religious tracts, saying that you had prayed over them that they might prove instrumental in bringing every precious immortal soul under our roof to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and each of you, after exhorting us to 'flee from the wrath to come,' and lay hold of that sal-

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vation which is offered in the gospel, left us. 'Good riddance,' said I after your departure, 'and I hope, from the cool reception those obtruders have met with, they will be satisfied to let us alone in future.' I then proceeded to fling the tracts into the fire, among which I afterwards discovered was the Dairyman's Daughter. 'Don't burn them,' said my mother, 'but fling them on the shelf; they'll do to light candles with.'

"The next week, who should visit us again but yourself and the same deacon. 'Now,' said I to the family as you were approaching the house, 'this is too bad. I do wish those overzealous men would be less officious, mind their own business, and let us alone;' but nothing daunted, in you came, and if any thing, were treated more uncivilly than before; and after questioning us as to our progress in the divine life, you again retired, without being asked to pray with us, or even to take a chair, but leaving some seven or eight more tracts, which, with the former ones, were immediately placed on the shelf without perusal.

"From this second cold reception I hoped that a complete quietus had been placed on all future visits; but to my horror, I beheld, the following week, our devoted pastor and yourself again approaching our dwelling. 'This,' I exclaimed, 'is insupportable,' and I flew to the door and took refuge in my chamber, leaving the rest of the family to get along with you the best they could; and after much exhortation, and your proposing prayer, to which my father and mother reluctantly consented, you again left us.

"On coming down stairs and hearing the purport of your conversation, I exclaimed, 'I really believe those mistaken men do not take us for Christians, when it is known by every one that we attend meeting every Sabbath-day, particularly when the weather is pleasant;' and approaching the table on which you had placed half a dozen tracts, I with a brush of the hand at once swept them off upon the floor, but in falling one flew open, and my eye at once caught its title, 'Sinner directed to the Saviour.' I picked it up. Curiosity, rather than feeling that I was a sinner, led me to a perusal

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of its contents, and this led by and by to a perusal of all the others, which had been previously laid upon the shelf.

"I have not strength," said she, "to go into all the details which followed. Suffice it to say that I was shortly after, I trust, by the power of the Holy Spirit, brought under deep conviction; and at length not only I, but all the older members of the family, obtained hope and peace in believing in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and we have been enabled by divine grace to manifest our faith by uniting ourselves with the church.

"Now what I wanted to say to you in particular was this, that had you and the kind Christian friends who accompanied you been discouraged by the cool reception you met with on your first and second visits, I should probably now have been on the brink of despair; but, praised be God, there are no thorns under my pillow, for it has been verified to me that

"'Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are.'

Never be discouraged in making visits to the unregenerate and the ungodly, however unkind, forbidding, and cold your reception may be; but *go again, go again*—"

Here her voice faltered, and she fainted. She revived, however, in a few minutes, when she had just strength enough to request I would lead in a short prayer, in which I commended her departing spirit to the God who gave it; and on rising from my knees by her bedside, I bade her and the dear relatives by whom we were surrounded a final affectionate farewell, and resumed my journey with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God our Saviour for his manifold mercies to this dear family.

TO A YOUNG PREACHER OF ERROR.

"WARE, November 27, 1826.

"MY DEAR SIR—I consider it a duty I owe to you, to declare, as I do with much pleasure, that I have never heard you

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spoken of but in the highest terms, as possessing every moral virtue, with an unexceptionable character. What I did say had respect to your religious sentiments; for a man may sustain a good moral character, and by that means be the more successful propagator of the most dangerous and ruinous error.

"I did say that which might be considered a disapproval of your views of religious truth; and I owe it to your own soul and to the cause of that Redeemer which I consider the propagation of your sentiments calculated to subvert, *now* to express myself more distinctly; and in doing this, I do say that I deem the system of doctrines which you have embraced directly hostile to the true spirit and meaning of the Bible, and infinitely dangerous to immortal souls, and that in preaching them, you bear a responsibility which I would not sustain for worlds.

"Before I close, permit me to conjure you to pause and reflect on this responsibility, and on what authority you have to publish such tenets, in view of that day when you and I must 'stand before the judgment-seat of Christ,' and 'every man's work shall be tried so as by fire.'"

It is interesting to know that in after years the sentiments of this young man became truly evangelical.

TO A DISTINGUISHED MERCHANT IN GERMANY.

"Now comes a subject for which I am much less qualified, '*entomology*.' I confess I never took an interest in beetles and butterflies, though I profess to be a friend to knowledge and science. If you will talk to me about European manufactures, or cargoes of cotton, rice, sugars, coffee, teas, indigo, ashes, bills of lading, etc., I can understand and appreciate all you say. If however I should, *par hazard*, find any real warm amateur of the science of entomology, I will propose your correspondence.

"I had already learned, through our young friend M——, that you were living in what might be called an earthly para-

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dise; and I am much gratified to learn that you have a young clergyman under your roof who you say 'is an able naturalist,' and who is much engaged in arranging your large collections in natural history; this is well.

"But I hope, for your own sake and that of your dear wife and children, and for the sake of the precious immortal souls at your delightful residence, that this good clergyman is still more engaged in endeavoring, through the all-powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, to bring each of you to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, that you may thereby be prepared, one and all, on quitting your earthly paradise, to enter the paradise of God, there to celebrate together for ever the praises of redeeming love."

ON HEARING JENNY LIND.

"Great as Jenny Lind is in ordinary music, her richest power and sublimest pathos are called forth in the touching strains of sacred music, which led me to exclaim with the queen of Sheba, 'The half was not told me.'

"With what gushing tenderness of emotion and sublime purity of expression were the heavenly strains of the song, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor,' rendered, touchingly unfolding the ineffable compassion and grace of the sentiment.

"And in that magnificent piece, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' how triumphantly did the firm, clear, rapturous tones of her sweet voice portray the majesty and lustre of faith's sublimest achievements.

"The immense audience instinctively bowed beneath the irresistible impulse, and streaming eyes and stifled sobs on all sides attested the artistic triumph of the queen of song. The sacred harmony of these angelic strains still vibrates on my throbbing heart, and leads me to ask, if mortals are permitted to listen to such angelic strains here below, what will be the thrill of sacred joy experienced by those who may be permitted hereafter to join the more than seraphic 'song of Moses and the Lamb' around the throne of God's glory?"

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AN AMERICAN'S VISIT TO THE KING OF SWEDEN.

A New Englander had brought letters of introduction to Mr. Wilder at Paris, and obtained a letter from him for Stockholm, saying, among other motives for going, that he wished to see the king there. Mr. Wilder told him he would not probably be able to do so, except as the king might be riding out; but the gentleman said he intended to do more than that.

Arrived at Stockholm, he called on our ambassador there; said he had but a day or two to spare, but wished to see the king. The ambassador replied, "That is impossible; there is no reception just now." But the persevering son of New England said he had come on purpose, and must do it.

The next day he went to the palace, passed in with others, and when stopped, as he was several times, by some official, just answered in English, which they did not understand, "I want to see the king." They allowed him to go on, supposing him attached to some foreign embassy, until he came to one of them who understood English, and who, after the gentleman told him he "was an American, could not wait for a regular reception, but wanted to see the king," went to the king, and said there was an eccentric stranger in the ante-room, who insisted upon seeing his majesty. Let him come in, said the good-natured monarch. The gentleman, upon his return to Paris, described the interview as follows:

"I went into the room where the king was. Thought he held out his hand to me in a very awkward manner, having the back of it upwards"—etiquette called for a kiss upon it, but our republican did not know that—"however, I took hold and shook it, and said, 'How do you do, Mr. King; and how 's your wife and family? I have come all the way from America, and thought I would call and see you.' The king was very polite, asked how long I intended to stay in Sweden, and also some questions about America. Then he made

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a little bow. I bowed too; and soon the king bowed again. I did not know at first that he meant by that to say good-by; but pretty soon I came away. Our minister could not believe at first that I had really seen the king; but the next day, as I was standing with him under a tree as the royal carriage drove by, the king saw me, and made a very low bow, and that satisfied our ambassador that my story was true."

AN INCIDENT AT SEA.

Once when crossing the ocean homeward with a gentleman who became so despairingly sea-sick as to wish for death and profess that it was certainly close at hand, Mr. Wilder, after encouraging his friend in every possible way, but with vain effect, said to him, "Well, sir, then I must see the captain immediately, and inquire how much lead he has on hand." "Lead!" said the sick man; "why do you care to know?" "Do you not understand?" said Mr. Wilder; "you see we are still far from land. It is well to make all necessary arrangements in season. Several pounds of lead at your feet, if the captain has it to spare, will best answer the desired purpose; and we should have to hasten the burial."

The sick man suddenly recovered. Rising up, he ordered a good beefsteak for dinner, and on that voyage was no more troubled with sea-sickness.

WHITE LAKE SUMMER RECREATIONS.

In the leisure of his summer retreat, Mr. Wilder frequently amused himself and others with sketches from his pen.

"There seems to be concentrated in this rural retreat those who combine that circumspect deportment, that suavity of manners, that reciprocity of courtesy, that similarity of sentiment, that delicacy of expression, that refinement of

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taste, that familiarity of intercourse always restrained within the severest limits of propriety, which is the result of high intellectual culture, and which in its development throws a charm over all the amenities of life.

"Could all elsewhere have participated with us in the thrilling religious exercises of last evening, which still vibrate with sacred emotion upon each heart present, methinks one and all would have exclaimed,

"'How sweet a Sabbath thus to spend,
In hope of one that ne'er shall end.'

"Did we all but possess and cherish in our hearts those heavenly treasures which were last evening unfolded to our enraptured view, well might we exclaim with the poet,

"'From every earthly pleasure,
From every transient joy,
From every mortal treasure
That soon will fade and die;
No longer these desiring,
Upward our wishes tend,
To nobler bliss aspiring,
And joys that never end.'"

MONOLOGUE ON FLOWERS AND WINTER.

How much like the joys of earth are these fading flowers. They come, they linger a while in surpassing splendor to gladden our hearts, and then they pass away for ever.

The flower fadeth, but it fadeth to reappear again. Our now departed joys, if founded on the Rock of ages, will reappear in heaven.

The dreary winter will pass, and the sweet voice of sylvan songsters and the hum of insects will be called from their sleep of death, and awakened to renewed freshness and beauty.

So all those who have yielded to the stroke of the uncompromising king of terrors will rise again, if possessing a clear title to a heavenly inheritance, to glow in unceasing splendor before the throne of God. May we be among the chosen plants transferred from the garden of His grace here below, to bloom in perennial beauty in his paradise above.

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A YOUNG LADY.

In the blooming sixteenth year of her age, her personal appearance was all that a connoisseur of female beauty could desire to attract the eye, and captivate and hold in thrall the affections.

Of the middle size, her person was formed with such exact symmetry, that it might have served as a model for a statuary; while in her complexion the colors of the rose were so delicately blended with the hues of the modest lily, that I was almost tempted to exclaim,

> "Delighted Nature looks, but looks in vain,
> Among her sex to find her like again."

There is a pleasing eloquence that lurks in every look and lineament, which is ever ready to spring forth and give silent though powerful expression to affection, sympathy, and all the hidden emotions. Of this eloquence this young lady had received a liberal portion, so that a physiognomist might have discovered in the intelligent benignity of her looks, the purity of her intentions springing from a heart filled with love to every fellow-creature.

But the beauties of her mind and the piety of her heart were not less fascinating than the graces of her person; for under the direction of her excellent, intelligent, and well-disciplined mother, she had acquired an education far beyond the generality of young ladies of that day; while her modesty, courtesy, sweetness of temper, and benevolence of disposition threw a pleasing softness over her expressive eye and fine features, which almost approached to languor, and which was seldom changed to a more lively expression except for the purpose of dispelling the sadness, promoting the happiness, and enlivening those companions with whom she most frequently associated.

Could such a lovely being be seen and not admired? Could she be admired even by the most fastidious, without his thoughts being refined and purified, and his heart acknowledging the most sincere affection; and, in short, who could regard her but as possessing all the charms and virtues

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which adorn and elevate the female character? [She was the bride of 1814, and of the "golden wedding" of 1864.]

AN OCTOBER FAREWELL.

WRITTEN BY MR. WILDER ON OCCASION OF THE DEPARTURE FROM WHITE LAKE OF MR. AND MRS. W. W. CHESTER AND OTHERS.

"OCTOBER 8, 1857.

"Adieu to White Lake, our dear summer home,
To the rocks and the woods and the flowers past bloom,
To the valleys and hills and wild 'Lion's den,'
To 'Redan' and 'Malakoff,' and lone, sheltered glen.
No more will the echoes awake to the voice
Of music and laughter when young hearts rejoice;
For wildly I hear the autumn winds moan
A requiem sad, that summer is gone.
Yet beauty still lingers, and weaves her bright spell
Over forest and grove, over landscape and dell;
And decked in their mantle of crimson and green,
The trees in their glorious beauty are seen:
Their yellow leaves falling, seem sadly to say,
Adieu to the loved ones who leave us to-day.

"Adieu to the voices of friendship so dear;
Adieu to warm hearts, and sympathy's tear;
To the jest and the laugh, and the gay repartee;
To the gambols of childhood in frolicsome glee:
Adieu to the gifted; no more on the ear
Fall the eloquent words which thrill one to hear;
To the 'Verduous Vista' and 'Lady Lake's' prow,
And all the bright visions which gleam on me now.
No more will resound, 'All aboard; 'tis fair weather,'
Nor, 'Come, ladies, keep time, and row all together.'
Adieu to the sunshine, the birds and the breeze
Now singing and whistling through the dark hemlock trees.
Adieu to the lake, where white sails are glancing;
Where sunlight upon the blue water is dancing;

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Where on its dark bosom the gray mist is sleeping,
Or stars, in deep silence, their vigils are keeping.
Adieu to the landscape, the clouds, and the sky,
Whose shadows reflected in pure waters lie.
Adieu to White Lake, the home of my heart;
One look at the mansion, as sadly we part.

"S. V. S. W."

To the lovely Mrs. Chester, whose presence had been one of the chief attractions of the Mansion House, Mr. Wilder, soon after her death, paid the following tribute:

"Seldom have we known a lady who was so universally respected and beloved by all who enjoyed her acquaintance. The beautiful traits of character which she possessed in an eminent degree, and which commanded the admiration of all who knew her, are rarely combined in the same person. To a cultivated intellect were added a sympathizing heart, kindly social courtesies, refined and elegant tastes. Disinterested, expansive benevolence was entwined about every fibre of her soul, and characterized all her doings. But more especially will her memory be cherished for the genuine and benignant fruits of personal piety. Like her divine Master, she devoted her life to doing good. Jesus was her trust; his promises her consolation in the hour of trial; his grace her support in the last conflict."

HUMAN LIFE.

Our feeble bark, while gliding down the river of time, may not escape the adverse currents, whirlpools, and sunken rocks which lie in its passage; but with the Lord Jesus Christ at the helm, it will be conducted in peace and safety to the celestial ocean of eternity, where we shall be permitted to celebrate for ever the praises of redeeming love.

S. V. S. WILDER.

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